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RENAISSANCE IN ITALY

THE FINE ARTS

BY

JOHN ADDINGTON SYMONDS 1840-93

AUTHOR OF

'STUDIES OF THE GREEK POETS,' 'SKETCHES IN ITALY AND GREECE'

ETC.

Dii Romæ indigetes, Trojæ tuque auctor, Apollo,
Unde genus nostrum cœli se tollit ad astra,
Hanc saltem auferri laudem prohibete Latinis:
Artibus emineat semper, studiisque Minervæ,
Italia, et gentes doceat pulcherrima Roma;
Quandoquidem armorum penitus fortuna recessit,
Tanta Italos inter crevit discordia reges;
Ipsi nos inter sævos distringimus enses,
Nec patriam pudet externis aperire tyrannis

VIDA, *Poetica*, lib. ii.

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PREFACE[1]

This third volume of my book on the 'Renaissance in Italy' does not pretend to retrace the history of the Italian arts, but rather to define their relation to the main movement of Renaissance culture. Keeping this, the chief object of my whole work, steadily in view, I have tried to explain the dependence of the arts on mediæval Christianity at their commencement, their gradual emancipation from ecclesiastical control, and their final attainment of freedom at the moment when the classical revival culminated.

Not to notice the mediæval period in this evolution would be impossible; since the revival of Sculpture and Painting at the end of the thirteenth century was among the earliest signs of that new intellectual birth to which we give the title of Renaissance. I have, therefore, had to deal at some length with stages in the development of

[1] To the original edition of this volume.

Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting, which form a prelude to the proper age of my own history.

In studying the architectural branch of the subject, I have had recourse to Fergusson's 'Illustrated Handbook of Architecture,' to Burckhardt's 'Cicerone,' to Grüner's 'Terra-Cotta Buildings of North Italy,' to Milizia's 'Memorie degli Architetti,' and to many illustrated works on single buildings in Rome, Tuscany, Lombardy, and Venice. For the history of Sculpture I have used Burckhardt's 'Cicerone,' and the two important works of Charles C. Perkins, entitled 'Tuscan Sculptors,' and 'Italian Sculptors.' Such books as 'Le Tre Porte del Battistero di Firenze,' Grüner's 'Cathedral of Orvieto,' and Lasinio's 'Tabernacolo della Madonna d'Orsammichele' have been helpful by their illustrations. For the history of Painting I have made use principally of Vasari's 'Vite de' più eccellenti Pittori,' &c., in Le Monnier's edition of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's 'History of Painting,' of Burckhardt's 'Cicerone,' of Rosini's illustrated 'Storia della Pittura Italiana,' of Rio's 'L'Art Chrétien,' and of Henri Beyle's 'Histoire de la Peinture en Italie.' I should, however, far exceed the limits of a preface were I to make a list of all the books I have consulted with profit on the history of the arts in Italy.

In this part of my work I feel that I owe less to reading than to observation. I am not aware of having mentioned any important building, statue, or picture which I have not had the opportunity of studying. What I have written in this volume about the monuments of Italian art has always been first noted face to face with the originals, and afterwards corrected, modified, or confirmed in the course of subsequent journeys to Italy. I know that this method of composition, if it has the merit of freshness, entails some inequality of style and disproportion in the distribution of materials. In the final preparation of my work for press I have therefore endeavoured, as far as possible, to compensate this disadvantage by adhering to the main motive of my subject —the illustration of the Renaissance spirit as this was manifested in the Arts.

I must add, in conclusion, that Chapters VII. and IX. and Appendix II. are in part reprinted from the 'Westminster,' the 'Cornhill,' and the 'Contemporary.'

CLIFTON: *March* 1877.

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It has been granted only to two nations, the Greeks and the Italians, and to the latter only at the time of the Renaissance, to invest every phase and variety of intellectual energy with the form of art. Nothing notable was produced in Italy between the thirteenth and the seventeenth centuries that did not bear the stamp and character of fine art. If the methods of science may be truly said to regulate our modes of thinking at the present time, it is no less true that, during the Renaissance, art exercised a like controlling influence. Not only was each department of the fine arts practised with singular

success; not only was the national genius to a very large extent absorbed in painting, sculpture, and architecture; but the æsthetic impulse was more subtly and widely diffused than this alone would imply. It possessed the Italians in the very centre of their intellectual vitality, imposing its conditions on all the manifestations of their thought and feeling, so that even their shortcomings may be ascribed in a great measure to their inability to quit the æsthetic point of view.

We see this in their literature. It is probable that none but artistic natures will ever render full justice to the poetry of the Renaissance. Critics endowed with a less lively sensibility to beauty of outline and to harmony of form than the Italians, complain that their poetry lacks substantial qualities; nor is it except by long familiarity with the plastic arts of their contemporaries that we come to understand the ground assumed by Ariosto and Poliziano. We then perceive that these poets were not so much unable as instinctively unwilling to go beyond a certain circle of effects. They subordinated their work to the ideal of their age, and that ideal was one to which a painter rather than a poet might successfully aspire. A succession of pictures, harmoniously composed and delicately toned to please the mental eye, satisfied the taste of the Italians. But, however exquisite in design, rich in colour, and complete in execution this literary work may be, it strikes a Northern student as wanting in the highest elements of genius—sublimity of imagination, dramatic passion, energy and earnestness of purpose. In like manner, he finds it hard to appreciate those didactic compositions on trifling or prosaic themes, which delighted the Italians for the very reason that their workmanship surpassed their matter. These defects, as we judge them, are still more apparent in the graver branches of literature. In an essay or a treatise we do not so much care for well-balanced disposition of parts or beautifully rounded periods, though elegance may be thought essential to classic

masterpieces, as for weighty matter and trenchant observations. Having the latter, we can dispense at need with the former. The Italians of the Renaissance, under the sway of the fine arts, sought after form, and satisfied themselves with rhetoric. Therefore we condemn their moral disquisitions and their criticisms as the flimsy playthings of intellectual voluptuaries. Yet the right way of doing justice to these stylistic trifles is to regard them as products of an all-embracing genius for art, in a people whose most serious enthusiasms were æsthetic.

The speech of the Italians at that epoch, their social habits, their ideal of manners, their standard of morality, the estimate they formed of men, were alike conditioned and qualified by art. It was an age of splendid ceremonies and magnificent parade, when the furniture of houses, the armour of soldiers, the dress of citizens, the pomp of war, and the pageantry of festival were invariably and inevitably beautiful. On the meanest articles of domestic utility, cups and platters, door-panels and chimney-pieces, coverlets for beds and lids of linen-chests, a wealth of artistic invention was lavished by innumerable craftsmen, no less skilled in technical details than distinguished by rare taste. From the Pope upon S. Peter's chair to the clerks in a Florentine counting-house, every Italian was a judge of art. Art supplied the spiritual oxygen, without which the life of the Renaissance must have been atrophied. During that period of prodigious activity the entire nation seemed to be endowed with an instinct for the beautiful, and with the capacity for producing it in every conceivable form. As we travel through Italy at the present day, when 'time, war, pillage, and purchase' have done their worst to denude the country of its treasures, we still marvel at the incomparable and countless beauties stored in every burgh and hamlet. Pacing the picture galleries of Northern Europe, the country seats of English nobles, and the palaces of Spain, the same reflection is still forced upon us: how could Italy have

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done what she achieved within so short a space of time? What must the houses and the churches once have been, from which these spoils were taken, but which still remain so rich in masterpieces? Psychologically to explain this universal capacity for the fine arts in the nation at this epoch, is perhaps impossible. Yet the fact remains, that he who would comprehend the Italians of the Renaissance must study their art, and cling fast to that Ariadne-thread throughout the labyrinthine windings of national character. He must learn to recognise that herein lay the sources of their intellectual strength as well as the secret of their intellectual weakness.

It lies beyond the scope of this work to embrace in one inquiry the different forms of art in Italy, or to analyse the connection of the æsthetic instinct with the manifold manifestations of the Renaissance. Even the narrower task to which I must confine myself, is too vast for the limits I am forced to impose upon its treatment. I intend to deal with Italian painting as the one complete product which remains from the achievements of this period, touching upon sculpture and architecture more superficially. Not only is painting the art in which the Italians among all the nations of the modern world stand unapproachably alone, but it is also the one that best enables us to gauge their genius at the time when they impressed their culture on the rest of Europe. In the history of the Italian intellect painting takes the same rank as that of sculpture in the Greek. Before beginning, however, to trace the course of Italian art, it will be necessary to discuss some preliminary questions, important for a right understanding of the relations assumed by painting to the thoughts of the Renaissance, and for explaining its superiority over the sister art of sculpture in that age. This I feel the more bound to do because it is my object in this volume to treat of art with special reference to the general culture of the nation.

What, let us ask in the first place, was the task appointed for the fine arts on the threshold of the modern world? They had, before all things, to give form to the ideas evolved by Christianity, and to embody a class of emotions unknown to the ancients.[1] The inheritance of the Middle Ages had to be appropriated and expressed. In the course of performing this work, the painters helped to humanise religion, and revealed the dignity and beauty of the body of man. Next, in the fifteenth century, the riches of classic culture were discovered, and art was called upon to aid in the interpretation of the ancient to the modern mind. The problem was no longer simple. Christian and pagan traditions came into close contact, and contended for the empire of the newly liberated intellect. During this struggle the arts, true to their own principles, eliminated from both traditions the more strictly human elements, and expressed them in beautiful form to the imagination and the senses. The brush of the

[1] It may fairly be questioned whether that necessary connection between art and religion, which is commonly taken for granted, does in truth exist; in other words, whether great art might not flourish without any religious content. This, however, is a speculative problem, for the present and the future rather than the past. Historically, it has always been found that the arts in their origin are dependent on religion. Nor is the reason far to seek. Art aims at expressing an ideal; and this ideal is the transfiguration of human elements into something nobler, felt and apprehended by the imagination. Such an ideal, such an all-embracing glorification of humanity only exists for simple and unsophisticated societies in the form of religion. Religion is the universal poetry which all possess; and the artist, dealing with the mythology of his national belief, feels himself in vital sympathy with the imagination of the men for whom he works. More than the painter is required for the creation of great painting, and more than the poet for the exhibition of immortal verse. Painters are but the hands, and poets but the voices, whereby peoples express their accumulated thoughts and permanent emotions. Behind them crowd the generations of the myth-makers; and around them floats the vital atmosphere of enthusiasms on which their own souls and the souls of their brethren have been nourished

same painter depicted Bacchus wedding Ariadne and Mary fainting on the hill of Calvary. Careless of any peril to dogmatic orthodoxy, and undeterred by the dread of encouraging pagan sensuality, the artists wrought out their modern ideal of beauty in the double field of Christian and Hellenic legend. Before the force of painting was exhausted, it had thus traversed the whole cycle of thoughts and feelings that form the content of the modern mind. Throughout this performance, art proved itself a powerful co-agent in the emancipation of the intellect; the impartiality wherewith its methods were applied to subjects sacred and profane, the emphasis laid upon physical strength and beauty as good things and desirable, the subordination of classical and mediæval myths to one æsthetic law of loveliness, all tended to withdraw attention from the differences between paganism and Christianity, and to fix it on the goodliness of that humanity wherein both find their harmony.

This being in general the task assigned to art in the Renaissance, we may next inquire what constituted the specific quality of modern as distinguished from antique feeling, and why painting could not fail to take the first place among modern arts. In other words, how was it that, while sculpture was the characteristic fine art of antiquity, painting became the distinguishing fine art of the modern era? No true form of figurative art intervened between Greek sculpture and Italian painting. The latter took up the work of investing thought with sensible shape from the dead hands of the former. Nor had the tradition that connected art with religion been interrupted, although a new cycle of religious ideas had been substituted for the old ones. The late Roman and Byzantine manners, through which the vital energies of the Athenian genius dwindled into barren formalism, still lingered, giving crude and lifeless form to Christian conceptions. But the thinking and feeling subject, meanwhile,

had undergone a change so all-important that it now imperatively required fresh channels for its self-expression. It was destined to find these, not as of old in sculpture, but in painting.

During the interval between the closing of the ancient and the opening of the modern age, the faith of Christians had attached itself to symbols and material objects little better than fetishes. The host, the relic, the wonder-working shrine, things endowed with a mysterious potency, evoked the yearning and the awe of mediæval multitudes. To such concrete actualities the worshippers referred their sense of the invisible divinity. The earth of Jerusalem, the Holy Sepulchre, the House of Loreto, the Sudarium of Saint Veronica, aroused their deepest sentiments of aweful adoration. Like Thomas, they could not be contented with believing; they must also touch and handle. At the same time, in apparent contradistinction to this demand for things of sense as signs of supersensual power, the claims of dogma on the intellect grew more imperious, and mysticism opened for the dreaming soul a realm of spiritual rapture. For the figurative arts there was no true place in either of these regions. Painting and sculpture were alike alien to the grosser superstitions, the scholastic subtleties, and the ecstatic trances of the Middle Ages; nor had they anything in common with the logic of theology. Votaries who kissed a fragment of the cross with passion, could have found but little to satisfy their ardour in pictures painted by a man of genius. A formless wooden idol, endowed with the virtue of curing disease, charmed the pilgrim more than a statue noticeable only for its beauty or its truth to life. We all know that *wunderthätige Bilder sind meist nur schlechte Gemälde.* In architecture alone, the mysticism of the Middle Ages, their vague but potent feelings of infinity, their yearning towards a deity invisible, but localised in holy things and places, found

artistic outlet. Therefore architecture was essentially a mediæval art. The rise of sculpture and painting indicated the quickening to life of new faculties, fresh intellectual interests, and a novel way of apprehending the old substance of religious feeling; for comprehension of these arts implies delight in things of beauty for their own sake, a sympathetic attitude towards the world of sense, a new freedom of the mind produced by the regeneration of society through love.

The mediæval faiths were still vivid when the first Italian painters began their work, and the sincere endeavour of these men was to set forth in beautiful and worthy form the truths of Christianity. The eyes of the worshipper should no longer have a mere stock or stone to contemplate: his imagination should be helped by the dramatic presentation of the scenes of sacred history, and his devotion be quickened by lively images of the passion of our Lord. Spirit should converse with spirit, through no veil of symbol, but through the transparent medium of art, itself instinct with inbreathed life and radiant with ideal beauty. The body and the soul, moreover, should be reconciled; and God's likeness should be once more acknowledged in the features and the limbs of man. Such was the promise of art; and this promise was in a great measure fulfilled by the painting of the fourteenth century. Men ceased to worship their God in the holiness of ugliness; and a great city called its street Glad on the birthday-festival of the first picture investing religious emotion with æsthetic charm. But in making good the promise they had given, it was needful for the arts on the one hand to enter a region not wholly their own—the region of abstractions and of mystical conceptions; and on the other to create a world of sensuous delightfulness, wherein the spiritual element was materialised to the injury of its own essential quality. Spirit, indeed, spake to spirit, so far as the

religious content was concerned; but flesh spake also to flesh in the æsthetic form. The incarnation promised by the arts involved a corresponding sensuousness. Heaven was brought down to earth, but at the cost of making men believe that earth itself was heavenly.

At this point the subject of our inquiry naturally divides into two main questions. The first concerns the form of figurative art specially adapted to the requirements of religious thought in the fourteenth century. The second treats of the effect resulting both to art and religion from the expression of mystical and theological conceptions in plastic form.

When we consider the nature of the ideas assimilated in the Middle Ages by the human mind, it is clear that art, in order to set them forth, demanded a language the Greeks had never greatly needed, and had therefore never fully learned. To over-estimate the difference from an æsthetic point of view between the religious notions of the Greeks and those which Christianity had made essential, would be difficult. Faith, hope, and charity; humility, endurance, suffering; the Resurrection and the Judgment; the Fall and the Redemption; Heaven and Hell; the height and depth of man's mixed nature; the drama of human destiny before the throne of God: into the sphere of thoughts like these, vivid and solemn, transcending the region of sense and corporeity, carrying the mind away to an ideal world, where the things of this earth obtained a new reality by virtue of their relation to an invisible and infinite Beyond, the modern arts in their infancy were thrust. There was nothing finite here or tangible, no gladness in the beauty of girlish foreheads or the swiftness of a young man's limbs, no simple idealisation of natural delightfulness. The human body, which the figurative arts must needs use as the vehicle of their expression, had ceased to have a value in and for itself, had ceased to be the true and adequate investiture of thoughts

demanded from the artist. At best it could be taken only as the symbol of some inner meaning, the shrine of an indwelling spirit nobler than itself; just as a lamp of alabaster owes its beauty and its worth to the flame it more than half conceals, the light transmitted through its scarce transparent walls.

In ancient art those moral and spiritual qualities which the Greeks recognised as truly human and therefore divine, allowed themselves to be incarnated in well-selected types of physical perfection. The deities of the Greek mythology were limited to the conditions of natural existence: they were men and women of a larger mould and freer personality; less complex, inasmuch as each completed some one attribute; less thwarted in activity, inasmuch as no limit was assigned to exercise of power. The passions and the faculties of man, analysed by unconscious psychology, and deified by religious fancy, were invested by sculpture with appropriate forms, the tact of the artist selecting corporeal qualities fitted to impersonate the special character of each divinity. Nor was it possible that, the gods and goddesses being what they were, exact analogues should not be found for them in idealised humanity. In a Greek statue there was enough soul to characterise the beauty of the body, to render her due meed of wisdom to Pallas, to distinguish the swiftness of Hermes from the strength of Heracles, or to contrast the virginal grace of Artemis with the abundance of Aphrodite's charms. At the same time the spirituality that gave its character to each Greek deity, was not such that, even in thought, it could be dissociated from corporeal form. The Greeks thought their gods as incarnate persons; and all the artist had to see to, was that this incarnate personality should be impressive in his marble.

Christianity, on the other hand, made the moral and spiritual nature of man all-essential. It sprang from an

earlier religion, that judged it impious to give any form to God. The body and its terrestrial activity occupied but a subordinate position in its system. It was the life of the soul, separable from this frame of flesh, and destined to endure when earth and all that it contains had ended—a life that upon this planet was continued conflict and aspiring struggle —which the arts, insofar as they became its instrument, were called upon to illustrate. It was the worship of a Deity, all spirit, to be sought on no one sacred hill, to be adored in no transcendent shape, that they were bound to heighten. The most highly prized among the Christian virtues had no necessary connection with beauty of feature or strength of limb. Such beauty and such strength at any rate were accidental, not essential. A Greek faun could not but be graceful; a Greek hero was of necessity vigorous. But S. Stephen might be steadfast to the death without physical charm; S. Anthony might put to flight the devils of the flesh without muscular force. It is clear that the radiant physical perfection proper to the deities of Greek sculpture was not sufficient in this sphere.

Again, the most stirring episodes of the Christian mythology involved pain and perturbation of the spirit; the victories of the Christian athletes were won in conflicts carried on within their hearts and souls—'For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers,' demoniac leaders of spiritual legions. It is, therefore, no less clear that the tranquillity and serenity of the Hellenic ideal, so necessary to consummate sculpture, was here out of place. How could the Last Judgment, that day of wrath, when every soul, however insignificant on earth, will play the first part for one moment in an awful tragedy, be properly expressed in plastic form, harmonious and pleasing? And supposing that the artist should abandon the attempt to exclude ugliness and discord, pain and confusion, from his representation of the *Dies Iræ*,

how could he succeed in setting forth by the sole medium of the human body the anxiety and anguish of the soul at such a time? The physical form, instead of being adequate to the ideas expressed, and therefore helpful to the artist, is a positive embarrassment, a source of weakness. The most powerful pictorial or sculpturesque delineation of the Judgment, when compared with the pangs inflicted on the spirit by a guilty conscience, pangs whereof words may render some account, but which can find no analogue in writhings of the limbs or face, must of necessity be found a failure. Still more impossible, if we pursue this train of thought into another region, is it for the figurative arts to approach the Christian conception of God in His omnipotence and unity. Christ Himself, the central figure of the Christian universe, the desired of all nations, in whom the Deity assumed a human form and dwelt with men, is no fit subject for such art at any rate as the Greeks had perfected. The fact of His incarnation brought Him indeed within the proper sphere of the fine arts; but the religious idea which He represents removed Him beyond the reach of sculpture. This is an all-important consideration. It is to this that our whole argument is tending. Therefore to enlarge upon this point will not be useless.

Christ is specially adored in His last act of love on Calvary; and how impossible it is to set that forth consistently with the requirements of strictly plastic art, may be gathered by comparing the passion of S. Bernard's Hymn to our Lord upon the Cross with all that Winckelmann and Hegel have so truly said about the restrained expression, dignified generality, and harmonious beauty essential to sculpture. It is the negation of tranquillity, the excess of feeling, the absence of comeliness, the contrast between visible weakness and invisible omnipotence, the physical humiliation voluntarily suffered by Him that 'ruled over all the angels, that walked on the pavements

of heaven, whose feet were clothed with stars'—it is all this that gives their force and pathos to these stanzas:

Omnis vigor atque viror
Hinc recessit; non admiror:
Mors apparet in inspectu,
Totus pendens in defectu,
Attritus ægrâ macie.

Sic affectus, sic despectus,
Propter me sic interfectus,
Peccatori tam indigno
Cum amoris in te signo
Appare clarâ facie.[1]

We have never heard that Pheidias or Praxiteles chose Prometheus upon Caucasus for the supreme display of his artistic skill; and even the anguish expressed in the group of the Laocoon is justly thought to violate the laws of antique sculpture. Yet here was a greater than Prometheus—one who had suffered more, and on whose suffering the salvation of the human race depended, to exclude whom from the sphere of representation in art was the same as confessing the utter impotence of art to grasp the vital thought of modern faith. It is clear that the muses of the new age had to haunt Calvary instead of Helicon, slaking their thirst at no Castalian spring, but at the fount of tears outpoured by all creation for a stricken God. What Hellas had achieved supplied no norm or method for the arts in this new service.

[1] All Thy strength and bloom are faded:
Who hath thus Thy state degraded?
Death upon Thy form is written;
See the wan worn limbs, the smitten
Breast upon the cruel tree!

Thus despised and desecrated,
Thus in dying desolated,
Slain for me, of sinners vilest,
Loving Lord, on me Thou smilest:
Shine, bright face, and strengthen me!

From what has hitherto been advanced, we may assert with confidence that, if the arts were to play an important part in Christian culture, an art was imperatively demanded that should be at home in the sphere of intense feeling, that should treat the body as the interpreter and symbol of the soul, and should not shrink from pain and passion. How far the fine arts were at all qualified to express the essential thoughts of Christianity—a doubt suggested in the foregoing paragraphs—and how far, through their proved inadequacy to perform this task completely, they weakened the hold of mediæval faiths upon the modern mind, are questions to be raised hereafter. For the present it is enough to affirm that, least of all the arts, could sculpture, with its essential repose and its dependence on corporeal conditions, solve the problem. Sculpture had suited the requirements of Greek thought. It belonged by right to men who not unwillingly accepted the life of this world as final, and who worshipped in their deities the incarnate personality of man made perfect. But it could not express the cycle of Christian ideas. The desire of a better world, the fear of a worse; the sense of sin referred to physical appetites, and the corresponding mortification of the flesh; hope, ecstasy, and penitence and prayer; all these imply contempt or hatred for the body, suggest notions too spiritual to be conveyed by the rounded contours of beautiful limbs, too full of struggle for statuesque tranquillity. The new element needed a more elastic medium of expression. Motives more varied, gradations of sentiment more delicate, the fugitive and transient phases of emotion, the inner depths of consciousness, had somehow to be seized. It was here that painting asserted its supremacy. Painting is many degrees further removed than sculpture from dependence on the body in the fulness of its physical proportions. It touches our sensibilities by suggestions more indirect, more mobile, and more multiform. Colour and shadow, aerial perspective and complicated grouping,

denied to sculpture, but within the proper realm of painting, have their own significance, their real relation to feelings vaguer, but not less potent, than those which find expression in the simple human form. To painting, again, belongs the play of feature, indicative of internal movement, through a whole gamut of modulations inapprehensible by sculpture. All that drapery by its partial concealment of the form it clothes, and landscape by its sympathies with human sentiment, may supply to enhance the passion of the spectator, pertains to painting. This art, therefore, owing to the greater variety of means at its disposal, and its greater adequacy to express emotion, became the paramount Italian art.

To sculpture in the Renaissance, shorn of the divine right to create gods and heroes, was left the narrower field of decoration, portraiture, and sepulchral monuments. In the last of these departments it found the noblest scope for its activity; for beyond the grave, according to Christian belief, the account of the striving, hoping, and resisting soul is settled. The corpse upon the bier may bear the stamp of spiritual character impressed on it in life; but the spirit, with its struggle and its passion, has escaped as from a prison-house, and flown else-whither. The body of the dead man, for whom this world is over, and who sleeps in peace, awaiting resurrection, and thereby not wholly dead, around whose tomb watch sympathising angels or contemplative genii, was, therefore, the proper subject for the highest Christian sculpture. Here, if anywhere, the right emotion could be adequately expressed in stone, and the moulded form be made the symbol of repose, expectant of restored activity. The greatest sculptor of the modern age was essentially a poet of Death.

Painting, then, for the reasons already assigned and insisted on, was the art demanded by the modern intellect upon its emergence from the stillness of the Middle Ages. The problem, however, even for the art of painting was not simple

The painters, following the masters of mosaic, began by setting forth the history, mythology, and legends of the Christian Church in imagery freer and more beautiful than lay within the scope of treatment by Romanesque or Byzantine art. So far their task was comparatively easy; for the idyllic grace of maternal love in the Madonna, the pathetic incidents of martyrdom, the courage of confessors, the ecstasies of celestial joy in redeemed souls, the loveliness of a pure life in modest virgins, and the dramatic episodes of sacred story, furnish a multitude of motives admirably pictorial. There was, therefore, no great obstacle upon the threshold, so long as artists gave their willing service to the Church. Yet, looking back upon this phase of painting, we are able to perceive that already the adaptation of art to Christian dogma entailed concessions on both sides. Much, on the one hand, had to be omitted from the programme offered to artistic treatment, for the reason that the fine arts could not deal with it at all. Much, on the other hand, had to be expressed by means which painting in a state of perfect freedom would repudiate. Allegorical symbols, like Prudence with two faces, and painful episodes of agony and anguish, marred her work of beauty. There was consequently a double compromise, involving a double sacrifice of something precious. The faith suffered by having its mysteries brought into the light of day, incarnated in form, and humanised. Art suffered by being forced to render intellectual abstractions to the eye through figured symbols.

As technical skill increased, and as beauty, the proper end of art, became more rightly understood, the painters found that their craft was worthy of being made an end in itself, and that the actualities of life observed around them had claims upon their genius no less weighty than dogmatic mysteries. The subjects they had striven at first to realise with all simplicity now became little better than vehicles for the

display of sensuous beauty, science, and mundane pageantry. The human body received separate and independent study, as a thing in itself incomparably beautiful, commanding more powerful emotions by its magic than aught else that sways the soul. At the same time the external world, with all its wealth of animal and vegetable life, together with the works of human ingenuity in costly clothing and superb buildings, was seen to be in every detail worthy of most patient imitation. Anatomy and perspective taxed the understanding of the artist, whose whole force was no longer devoted to the task of bringing religious ideas within the limits of the representable. Next, when the classical revival came into play, the arts, in obedience to the spirit of the age, left the sphere of sacred subjects, and employed their full-grown faculties in the domain of myths and Pagan fancies. In this way painting may truly be said to have opened the new era of culture, and to have first manifested the freedom of the modern mind. When Luca Signorelli drew naked young men for a background to his picture of Madonna and the infant Christ, he created for the student a symbol of the attitude assumed by fine art in its liberty of outlook over the whole range of human interests. Standing before this picture in the Uffizzi, we feel that the Church, while hoping to adorn her cherished dogmas with æsthetic beauty, had encouraged a power antagonistic to her own, a power that liberated the spirit she sought to enthral, restoring to mankind the earthly paradise from which monasticism had expelled it.

Not to diverge at this point, and to entertain the difficult problem of the relation of the fine arts to Christianity, would be to shrink from the most thorny question offered to the understanding by the history of the Renaissance. On the very threshold of the matter I am bound to affirm my conviction that the spiritual purists of all ages—the Jews, the iconoclasts of Byzantium, Savonarola, and our Puritan

ancestors—were justified in their mistrust of plastic art. The spirit of Christianity and the spirit of figurative art are opposed, not because such art is immoral, but because it cannot free itself from sensuous associations.[1] It is always bringing us back to the dear life of earth, from which the faith would sever us. It is always reminding us of the body which piety bids us to forget. Painters and sculptors glorify that which saints and ascetics have mortified. The masterpieces of Titian and Correggio, for example, lead the soul away from compunction, away from penitence, away from worship even, to dwell on the delight of youthful faces, blooming colour, graceful movement, delicate emotion.[2] Nor is this all: religious motives may be misused for what is worse than merely sensuous suggestiveness. The masterpieces of the Bolognese and Neapolitan painters, while they pretend to quicken compassion for martyrs in their agony, pander to a bestial blood-lust lurking in the darkest chambers of the soul.[3] Therefore it is that piety, whether the piety of monastic Italy or of Puritan England, turns from these æsthetic triumphs as from something alien to itself. When the worshipper would fain ascend on wings of ecstasy to God, the infinite, ineffable, unrealised, how can he endure the contact of those splendid forms, in which the lust of the eye and the pride of life, professing to subserve devotion, remind

[1] I am aware that many of my readers will demur that I am confounding Christianity with ascetic or monastic Christianity; yet I cannot read the New Testament, the *Imitatio Christi*, the *Confessions* of S. Augustine, and the *Pilgrim's Progress* without feeling that Christianity in its origin, and as understood by its chief champions, was and is ascetic. Of this Christianity I therefore speak, not of the philosophised Christianity, which is reasonably regarded with suspicion by the orthodox and the uncompromising. It was, moreover, with Christianity of this primitive type that the arts came first into collision.

[2] Titian's 'Assumption of the Virgin' at Venice, Correggio's 'Coronation of the Virgin' at Parma.

[3] Domenichino, Guido, Ribera Salvator Rosa.

him rudely of the goodliness of sensual existence? Art, by magnifying human beauty, contradicts these Pauline maxims: 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain;' 'Set your affections on things above, not on things on earth;' 'Your life is hid with Christ in God.' The sublimity and elevation it gives to carnal loveliness are themselves hostile to the spirit that holds no truce or compromise of traffic with the flesh. As displayed in its most perfect phases, in Greek sculpture and Venetian painting, art dignifies the actual mundane life of man; but Christ, in the language of uncompromising piety, means everything most alien to this mundane life—self-denial, abstinence from fleshly pleasure, the waiting for true bliss beyond the grave, seclusion even from social and domestic ties. 'He that loveth father and mother more than me, is not worthy of me.' 'He that taketh not his cross and followeth me, is not worthy of me.' It is needful to insist upon these extremest sentences of the New Testament, because upon them was based the religious practice of the Middle Ages, more sincere in their determination to fulfil the letter and embrace the spirit of the Gospel than any succeeding age has been.[1]

If, then, there really exists this antagonism between fine art glorifying human life and piety contemning it, how came it, we may ask, that even in the Middle Ages the Church hailed art as her coadjutor? The answer lies in this, that the Church has always compromised. The movement of the modern world, upon the close of the Middle Ages, offered the Church a compromise, which it would have been difficult to refuse, and in which she perceived at first no peril to her dogmas. When the conflict of the first few centuries of Christianity had ended in her triumph, she began to mediate between asceticism and the world. Intent on absorbing all existent elements of life and power, she conformed her

[1] Not to quote again the *Imitatio Christi*, it is enough to allude to S. Francis as shown in the *Fioretti*.

system to the Roman type, established her service in basilicas and Pagan temples, adopted portions of the antique ritual, and converted local genii into saints. At the same time she utilised the spiritual forces of monasticism, and turned the mystic impulse of ecstatics to account. The Orders of the Preachers and the Begging Friars became her militia and police; the mystery of Christ's presence in the Eucharist was made an engine of the priesthood; the dreams of Paradise and Purgatory gave value to her pardons, interdictions, jubilees, indulgences, and curses. In the Church the spirit of the cloister and the spirit of the world found neutral ground, and to the practical accommodation between these hostile elements she owed her wide supremacy. The Christianity she formed and propagated was different from that of the New Testament, inasmuch as it had taken up into itself a mass of mythological anthropomorphic elements. Thus transmuted and materialised, thus accepted by the vivid faith of an unquestioning populace, Christianity offered a proper medium for artistic activity. The whole first period of Italian painting was occupied with the endeavour to set forth in form and colour the popular conceptions of a faith at once unphilosophical and unspiritual, beautiful and fit for art by reason of the human elements it had assumed into its substance. It was natural, therefore, that the Church should show herself indulgent to the arts, which were effecting in their own sphere what she had previously accomplished, though purists and ascetics, holding fast by the original spirit of their creed, might remain irreconcilably antagonistic to their influence. The Reformation, on the contrary, rejecting the whole mass of compromises sanctioned by the Church, and returning to the elemental principles of the faith, was no less naturally opposed to fine arts, which, after giving sensuous form to Catholic mythology, had recently attained to liberty and brought again the gods of Greece.

A single illustration might be selected from the annals of Italian painting to prove how difficult even the holiest-minded and most earnest painter found it to effect the proper junction between plastic beauty and pious feeling. Fra Bartolommeo, the disciple of Savonarola, painted a Sebastian in the cloister of S. Marco, where it remained until the Dominican confessors became aware, through the avowals of female penitents, that this picture was a stumbling-block and snare to souls. It was then removed, and what became of it we do not know for certain. Fra Bartolommeo undoubtedly intended this ideal portrait of the martyr to be edifying. S. Sebastian was to stand before the world as the young man, strong and beautiful, who endured to the end and won the crown of martyrdom. No other ideas but those of heroism, constancy, or faith were meant to be expressed; but the painter's art demanded that their expression should be eminently beautiful, and the beautiful body of the young man distracted attention from his spiritual virtues to his physical perfections. A similar maladjustment of the means of plastic art to the purposes of religion would have been impossible in Hellas, where the temples of Erôs and of Phœbus stood side by side; but in Christian Florence the craftsman's skill sowed seeds of discord in the souls of the devout.[1]

This story is but a coarse instance of the separation between piety and plastic art. In truth, the difficulty of uniting them in such a way that the latter shall enforce the former, lies far deeper than its powers of illustration reach. Religion has its proper end in contemplation and in conduct. Art aims at presenting sensuous embodiment of thoughts and feelings with

[1] The difficulty of combining the true spirit of piety with the ideal of natural beauty in art was strongly felt by Savonarola. Rio (*L'Art chrétien*, vol. ii. pp. 422–426) has written eloquently on this subject, but without making it plain how Savonarola's condemnation of life studies from the nude could possibly have been other than an obstacle to the liberal and scientific prosecution of the art of painting.

a view to intellectual enjoyment. Now, many thoughts are incapable of sensuous embodiment; they appear as abstractions to the philosophical intellect or as dogmas to the theological understanding. To effect an alliance between art and philosophy or art and theology in the specific region of either religion or speculation is, therefore, an impossibility. In like manner there are many feelings which cannot properly assume a sensuous form; and these are precisely religious feelings, in which the soul abandons sense, and leaves the actual world behind, to seek her freedom in a spiritual region.[1] Yet, while we recognise the truth of this reasoning, it would be unscientific to maintain that, until they are brought into close and inconvenient contact, there is direct hostility between religion and the arts. The sphere of the two is separate; their aims are distinct; they must be allowed to perfect themselves, each after its own fashion. In the large philosophy of human nature, represented by Goethe's famous motto, there is room for both, because those who embrace it bend their natures neither wholly to the pietism of the cloister nor to the sensuality of art. They find the meeting-point of art and of religion in their own humanity, and perceive that the antagonism of the two begins when art is set to do work alien to its nature, and to minister to what it does not naturally serve.

At the risk of repetition I must now resume the points I have attempted to establish in this chapter. As in ancient Greece, so also in Renaissance Italy, the fine arts assumed the first place in the intellectual culture of the nation. But the thought and feeling of the modern world required an æsthetic medium more capable of expressing emotion in its intensity,

[1] See Rio, *L'Art chrétien*, vol. ii. chap. xi. pp. 319–327, for an ingenious defence of mystic art. The tales he tells of Bernardino da Siena and the blessed Umiliana will not win the sympathy of Teutonic Christians, who must believe that semi-sensuous, semi-pious raptures, like those described by S. Catherine of Siena and S. Theresa, have something in them psychologically morbid.

variety, and subtlety than sculpture. Therefore painting was the art of arts for Italy. Yet even painting, notwithstanding the range and wealth of its resources, could not deal with the motives of Christianity so successfully as sculpture with the myths of Paganism. The religion it interpreted transcended the actual conditions of humanity, while art is bound down by its nature to the limitations of the world we live in. The Church imagined art would help her; and within a certain sphere of subjects, by vividly depicting Scripture histories and the lives of saints, by creating new types of serene beauty and pure joy, by giving form to angelic beings, by interpreting Mariolatry in all its charm and pathos, and by rousing deep sympathy with our Lord in His Passion, painting lent efficient aid to piety. Yet painting had to omit the very pith and kernel of Christianity as conceived by devout, uncompromising purists. Nor did it do what the Church would have desired. Instead of riveting the fetters of ecclesiastical authority, instead of enforcing mysticism and asceticism, it really restored to humanity the sense of its own dignity and beauty, and helped to proved the untenability of the mediæval standpoint; for art is essentially and uncontrollably free, and, what is more, is free precisely in that realm of sensuous delightfulness from which cloistral religion turns aside to seek her own ecstatic liberty of contemplation.

The first step in the emancipation of the modern mind was taken thus by art, proclaiming to men the glad tidings of their goodliness and greatness in a world of manifold enjoyment created for their use. Whatever painting touched, became by that touch human; piety, at the lure of art, folded her soaring wings and rested on the genial earth. This the Church had not foreseen. Because the freedom of the human spirit expressed itself in painting only under visible images, and not, like heresy, in abstract sentences; because this art sufficed for Mariolatry and confirmed the cult of local saints;

because its sensuousness was not at variance with a creed that had been deeply sensualised—the painters were allowed to run their course unchecked. Then came a second stage in their development of art. By placing the end of their endeavour in technical excellence and anatomical accuracy, they began to make representation an object in itself, independently of its spiritual significance. Next, under the influence of the classical revival, they brought home again the old powers of the earth —Aphrodite and Galatea and the Loves, Adonis and Narcissus and the Graces, Phœbus and Daphne and Aurora, Pan and the Fauns, and the Nymphs of the woods and the waves.

When these dead deities rose from their sepulchres to sway the hearts of men in the new age, it was found that something had been taken from their ancient bloom of innocence, something had been added of emotional intensity. Italian art recognised their claim to stand beside Madonna and the Saints in the Pantheon of humane culture; but the painters re-made them in accordance with the modern spirit. This slight touch of transformation proved that, though they were no longer objects of religious devotion, they still preserved a vital meaning for an altered age. Having personified for the antique world qualities which, though suppressed and ignored by militant and mediæval Christianity, were strictly human, the Hellenic deities still signified those qualities for modern Europe, now at length re-fortified by contact with the ancient mind. For it is needful to remember that in all movements of the Renaissance we ever find a return in all sincerity and faith to the glory and gladness of nature, whether in the world without or in the soul of man. To apprehend that glory and that gladness with the pure and primitive perceptions of the early mythopoets, was not given to the men of the new world. Yet they did what in them lay, with senses sophisticated by many centuries of subtlest warping, to replace the first free joy of kinship with primeval things. For the painters, far

more than for the poets of the sixteenth century, it was possible to reproduce a thousand forms of beauty, each attesting to the delightfulness of physical existence, to the inalienable rights of natural desire, and to the participation of mankind in pleasures held in common by us with the powers of earth and sea and air.

It is wonderful to watch the blending of elder and of younger forces in this process. The old gods lent a portion of their charm even to Christian mythology, and showered their beauty-bloom on saints who died renouncing them. Sodoma's Sebastian is but Hyacinth or Hylas, transpierced with arrows, so that pain and martyrdom add pathos to his poetry of youthfulness. Lionardo's S. John is a Faun of the forest, ivy-crowned and laughing, on whose lips the word 'Repent' would be a gleeful paradox. For the painters of the full Renaissance, Roman martyrs and Olympian deities—the heroes of the *Acta Sanctorum*, and the heroes of Greek romance—were alike burghers of one spiritual city, the city of the beautiful and human. What exquisite and evanescent fragrance was educed from these apparently diverse blossoms by their intermingle-ment and fusion—how the high-wrought sensibilities of the Christian were added to the clear and radiant fancies of the Greek, and how the frank sensuousness of the Pagan gave body and fulness to the floating wraiths of an ascetic faith—remains a miracle for those who, like our master Lionardo, love to scrutinise the secrets of twin natures and of double graces. There are not a few for whom the mystery is repellent, who shrink from it as from Hermaphroditus. These will always find something to pain them in the art of the Renais-sance.

Having co-ordinated the Christian and Pagan traditions in its work of beauty, painting could advance no farther. The stock of its sustaining motives was exhausted. A problem that preoccupied the minds of thinking men at this epoch

was how to harmonise the two chief moments of human culture, the classical and the ecclesiastical. Without being as conscious of their hostility as we are, men felt that the Pagan ideal was opposed to the Christian, and at the same time that a reconciliation had to be effected. Each had been worked out separately; but both were needed for the modern synthesis. All that æsthetic handling, in this region more precocious and more immediately fruitful than pure thought, could do towards mingling them, was done by the impartiality of the fine arts. Painting, in the work of Raphael, accomplished a more vital harmony than philosophy in the writings of Pico and Ficino. A new Catholicity, a cosmopolitan orthodoxy of the beautiful, was manifested in his pictures. It lay outside his power, or that of any other artist, to do more than to extract from both revelations the elements of plastic beauty they contained, and to show how freely he could use them for a common purpose. Nothing but the scientific method can in the long run enable us to reach that further point, outside both Christianity and Paganism, at which the classical ideal of a temperate and joyous natural life shall be restored to the conscience educated by the Gospel. This, perchance, is the religion, still unborn or undeveloped, whereof Joachim of Flora dimly prophesied when he said that the kingdom of the Father was past, the kingdom of the Son was passing, and the kingdom of the Spirit was to be. The essence of it is contained in the whole growth to usward of the human mind; and though a creed so highly intellectualised as that will be, can never receive adequate expression from the figurative arts, still the painting of the sixteenth century forms for it, as it were, a not unworthy vestibule. It does so, because it first succeeded in humanising the religion of the Middle Ages, in proclaiming the true value of antique paganism for the modern mind, and in making both subserve the purposes of free and unimpeded art.

Meanwhile, at the moment when painting was about to

be exhausted, a new art had arisen, for which it remained, within the æsthetic sphere, to achieve much that painting could not do. When the cycle of Christian ideas had been accomplished by the painters, and when the first passion for antiquity had been satisfied, it was given at last to Music to express the soul in all its manifold feeling and complexity of movement. In music we see the point of departure where art leaves the domain of myths, Christian as well as Pagan, and occupies itself with the emotional activity of man alone, and for its own sake. Melody and harmony, disconnected from words, are capable of receiving most varied interpretations, so that the same combinations of sound express the ecstasies of earthly and of heavenly love, conveying to the mind of the hearer only that element of pure passion which is the primitive and natural ground-material of either. They give distinct form to moods of feeling as yet undetermined; or, as the Italians put it, *la musica è il lamento dell' amore o la preghiera a gli dei.* This, combined with its independence of all corporeal conditions, renders music the true exponent of the spirit in its freedom, and therefore the essentially modern art.

For Painting, after the great work accomplished during the Renaissance, when the painters ran through the whole domain of thought within the scope of that age, there only remained portraiture, history, dramatic incident, landscape, *genre*, still life, and animals. In these spheres the art is still exercised, and much good work, undoubtedly, is annually produced by European painters. But painting has lost its hold upon the centre of our intellectual activity. It can no longer give form to the ideas that at the present epoch rule the modern world. These ideas are too abstract, too much a matter of the understanding, to be successfully handled by the figurative arts; and it cannot be too often or too emphatically stated that these arts produce nothing really great and

universal in relation to the spirit of their century, except by a process analogous to the mythopoetic. With conceptions incapable of being sensuously apprehended, with ideas that lose their value when they are incarnated, they have no power to deal. As meteors become luminous by traversing the grosser element of our terrestial atmosphere, so the thoughts that art employs must needs immerse themselves in sensuousness. They must be of a nature to gain rather than to suffer by such immersion; and they must make a direct appeal to minds habitually apt to think in metaphors and myths. Of this sort are all religious ideas at a certain stage of their development, and this attitude at certain moments of history is adopted by the popular consciousness. We have so far outgrown it, have so completely exchanged mythology for curiosity, and metaphor for science, that the necessary conditions for great art are wanting. Our deepest thoughts about the world and God are incapable of personification by any æsthetic process; they never enter that atmosphere wherein alone they could become through fine art luminous. For the painter, who is the form-giver, they have ceased to be shining stars, and are seen as opaque stones; and though divinity be in them, it is a deity that refuses the investiture of form.

CHAPTER II

ARCHITECTURE

Architecture of Mediæval Italy—Milan, Genoa, Venice—The Despots as Builders—Diversity of styles—Local influences—Lombard, Tuscan Romanesque, Gothic—Italian want of feeling for Gothic—Cathedrals of Siena and Orvieto—Secular Buildings of the Middle Ages—Florence and Venice—Private Palaces—Public Halls—Palazzo della Signoria at Florence—Arnolfo del Cambio—S. Maria del Fiore—Brunelleschi's Dome—Classical revival in Architecture—Roman ruins—Three periods in Renaissance Architecture—Their characteristics—Brunelleschi—Alberti—Palace-building—Michellozzo—Decorative work of the Revival—Bramante—Vitoni's Church of the Umiltà at Pistoja—Palazzo del Te—Villa Farnesina—Sansovino at Venice—Michael Angelo—The building of S. Peter's—Palladio—The Palazzo della Ragione at Vicenza—Lombard Architects—Theorists and students of Vitruvius—Vignola and Scamozzi—European influence of the Palladian style—Comparison of Scholars and Architects in relation to the Revival of Learning.

ARCHITECTURE is always the first of the fine arts to emerge from barbarism in the service of religion and of civic life. A house, as Hegel says, must be built for the god, before the image of the god, carved in stone or figured in mosaic, can be placed there. Council chambers must be prepared for the senate of a State before the national achievements can be painted on the walls. Thus Italy, before the age of the Renaissance proper, found herself provided with churches and palaces, which were destined in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to be adorned with frescoes and statues.

It was in the middle of the thirteenth century, during the long struggle for independence carried on by the republics of

Lombardy and Tuscany against the Empire and the nobles that some of the most durable and splendid public works were executed. The domes and towers of Florence and of Pisa were rising above the city walls, while the burghers who subscribed for their erection were staining the waves of Meloria and the cane-brakes of the Arbia with their blood. Lombardy, at the end of her duel with Frederick Barbarossa, completed a vast undertaking, by which the fields of Milan are still rendered more productive than any other pasture-land in Europe. The Naviglio Grande, bringing the waters of the Ticino through a plain of thirty miles to Milan, was begun in 1179, and was finished in 1258. The torrents of S. Gothard and the Simplon, which, after filling the Lago Maggiore, seemed destined to run wasteful through a wilderness of pebbles to the sea, were thus turned to account; and to this great engineering work, as bold as it was simple, Milan owed the wealth that placed her princes on a level with the sovereigns of Europe. At the same period she built her walls, and closed their circuit with the sixteen gates that showed she loved magnificence combined with strength. Genoa, between 1276 and 1283, protected her harbours by a gigantic mole, and in 1295 brought the streams of the Ligurian Alps into the city by an aqueduct worthy of old Rome. Venice had to win her very footing from the sea and sand. So firmly did she drive her piles, so vigilantly watch their preservation, that palaces and cathedrals of marble might be safely reared upon the bosom of the deep. Meanwhile, stone bridges began to span the rivers of Italy; the streets and squares of towns were everywhere paved with flags. Before the first years of the fourteenth century the Italian cities presented a spectacle of solid and substantial comfort, very startling to northerners who travelled from the unpaved lanes of London and the muddy labyrinths of Paris.

Sismondi remarks with just pride that these great works

were Republican. They were set on foot for the public use, and were constructed at the expense of the commonwealths. It is, however, right to add that what the communes had begun the princes continued. To the splendid taste of the Visconti dynasty, for instance, Milan owed her wonderful Duomo and the octagon bell-tower of S. Gottardo. The Certosas of Pavia and Chiaravalle, the palace of Pavia, and a host of minor monuments remain in Milan and its neighbourhood to prove how much a single family performed for the adornment of the cities they had subjugated. And what is true of Milan applies to Italy throughout its length and breadth. The Despots held their power at the price of magnificence in schemes of public utility. So much at least of the free spirit of the communes survived in them, that they were always rivalling each other in great works of architecture. Italian tyranny implied æsthetic taste and liberality of expenditure.

In no way is the characteristic diversity of the Italian communities so noticeable as in their buildings. Each district, each town, has a well-defined peculiarity, reflecting the specific qualities of the inhabitants and the conditions under which they grew in culture. In some cases we may refer this local character to nationality and geographical position. Thus the name of the Lombards has been given to a style of Romanesque, which prevailed through Northern and Central Italy during the period of Lombard ascendency.[1] The Tuscans never

[1] The question of the genesis of the Lombard style is one of the most difficult in Italian art-history. I would not willingly be understood to speak of Lombard architecture in any sense different from that in which it is usual to speak of Norman. To suppose that either the Lombards or the Normans had a style of their own, prior to their occupation of districts from the monuments of which they learned rudely to use the decayed Roman manner, would be incorrect. Yet it seems impossible to deny that both Normans and Lombards in adapting antecedent models added something of their own, specific to themselves

forgot the domes of their remote ancestors; the Romans adhered closely to Latin traditions; the Southerners were affected by Byzantine and Saracenic models. In many instances the geology of the neighbourhood determined the picturesque features of its architecture. The clay-fields of the valley of the Po produced the brickwork of Cremona, Pavia, Crema, Chiaravalle, and Vercelli. To their quarries of *mandorlato* the Veronese builders owed the peach-bloom colours of their columned aisles. Carrara provided the Pisans with mellow marble for their Baptistery and Cathedral; Monte Ferrato supplied Pistoja and Prato with green serpentine; while the *pietra serena* of the Apennines added austerity to the interior of Florentine buildings. Again, in other instances, we detect the influence of commerce or of conquest. The intercourse of Venice with Alexandria determined the unique architecture of S. Mark's. The Arabs and the Normans left ineffaceable traces of their sojourn on Palermo. Naples and Messina still bear marks upon their churches of French workmen. All along the coasts we here and there find evidences of Oriental style imported into mediæval Italy, while the impress of the Spaniard is no less manifest in edifices of a later period.

Existing thus in the midst of many potent influences, and surrounded by the ruins of past civilisations, the Italians recombined and mingled styles of marked variety. The Roman, Byzantine, Saracenic, Lombard, and German traditions were blended in their architecture, as the presiding genius of each place determined. It followed that master-works of rare and subtle invention were produced, while no one type was fully perfected, nor can we point to any paramount Italian manner. In Italy what was gained in richness and individuality was lost in uniformity and might. Yet we may well wonder at the

as Northerners. The Lombard, like the Norman or the Rhenish Romanesque, is the first stage in the progressive mediæval architecture of its own district

versatile appreciation of all types of beauty that these monuments evince. How strange, for example, it is to think of the Venetians borrowing the form and structure of their temple from the mosques of Alexandria, decking its façade with the horses of Lysippus, and panelling the sanctuary with marbles from the harem-floors of Eastern emperors; while at the other end of Italy, at Palermo, close beside the ruined colonnades of Greek Segesta, Norman kings were embroidering their massive churches with Saracenic arabesques and Byzantine mosaics, interspersing delicate Arabian tracery with rope-patterns and monsters of the deep, and linking Cuphic sentences with Scandinavian runes. Meanwhile, at Rome, tombs, baths, and theatres had been turned into fortresses. The Orsini held the Mole of Hadrian; the Savelli ensconced themselves in the Theatre of Marcellus, and the Colonnesi in the Mausoleum of Augustus; the Colosseum and the Arches of Constantine and Titus harboured the Frangipani; the Baths of Trajan housed the Capocci; while the Gaetani made a castle of Cæcilia Metella's tomb. Under those vast resounding vaults swarmed a brood of mediæval *bravi*—like the wasps that hang their pear-shaped combs along the cloisters of Pavia. There the ghost of the dead empire still sat throned and sceptred. The rites of Christianity were carried on beneath Agrippa's dome, in Diocletian's baths, in the Basilicas. No other style but that of the imperial people struck root near the Eternal City. Among her three hundred churches, Rome can only show one Gothic building. Further to the north, where German influences were more potent, the cathedrals still displayed, each after its own kind, a sunny southern waywardness. Glowing with marbles and mosaics, glittering with ornaments, where the foliage of the Corinthian acanthus hides the symbols of the Passion, and where birds and Cupids peep from tangled fruits beneath grave brows of saints and martyrs; leaning now to the long

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low colonnades of the Basilica, now to the high-built arches of the purely Pointed style; surmounting the meeting point of nave and transept with Etruscan domes; covering the façade with bas-reliefs, the roof with statues; raising the porch-pillars upon lions and winged griffins; flanking the nave with bell-towers, or planting them apart like flowers in isolation on the open square—these wonderful buildings, the delight and joy of all who love to trace variety in beauty, and to note the impress of a nation's genius upon its art, seem, like Italy herself, to feel all influences and to assimilate all nationalities.

Amid the many styles of architecture contending for mastery in Italy, three, before the age of the Revival, bid fair to win the battle. These were the Lombard, the Tuscan Romanesque, and the Gothic. Chronologically the two former flourished nearly during the same centuries, while Gothic, coming from without, suspended their development. But chronology is of little help in the history of Italian architecture; its main features being, not uniformity of progression, but synchronous diversity and salience of local type. What remained fixed through all changes in Italy was a bias toward the forms of Roman building, which eventually in the Renaissance, becoming scientifically apprehended, determined the taste of the whole nation.

It is, perhaps, not wholly fanciful to say that, as the Lombards just failed to mould the Italians by conquest into an united people, so their architecture fell short of creating one type for the peninsula.[1] From some points of view the historian might regret that Italy did not receive that thorough subjugation in the eighth century, which would have broken down local distinctions. Such regrets, however, are singularly

[1] I use the term Lombard architecture here, as defined above (p. 81, note), for the style of building prevalent in Italy during the Lombard occupation, or just after.

idle; for the main currents of the world's history move not by chance; and how, moreover, could Italy have fulfilled her destiny without the divers forms of political existence that made her what she was? Yet, standing before some of the great Lombard churches, we are inclined to speculate, perhaps with better reason, what the result would have been if that style of architecture could have assumed the complete ascendency over the Italians which the Romanesque and Gothic of the North exerted over France and England?[1] The pyramidal façade common in these buildings, the campanili that suspend aërial lanterns upon plain square towers, the domes rising tier over tier from the intersection of nave and transept to end in minarets and pinnacles, the low long colonnades of marble pilasters, the open porches resting upon lions, the harmonious blending of baked clay and rosy-tinted stone, the bold combination of round and pointed arches, and the weird invention whereby every string-course and capital has been carved with lions, sphinxes, serpents, mermaids, griffins, harpies, winged horses, lizards, and knights in armour—all these are elements that might, we fancy, have been developed into a noble national style. As it is, the churches in question are often more bizarre than really beautiful. Their peculiar character, however, is inseparably associated with the long reaches of green plain, the lordly rivers, and the background of blue hills and snowy Alps that constitute the charm of Lombard landscape.

If Lombard architecture, properly so-called, was partial in its influence and confined to a comparatively narrow local sphere, the same is true of the Tuscan Romanesque. The

[1] The essential difference between Italy and either Northern France or England, was that in Italy there existed monuments of Roman greatness, which could never be forgotten by her architects. They always worked with at least half of their attention turned to the past: nor had they the exhilarating sense of free, spontaneous, and progressive invention. This point has been well worked out by Mr. Street in the last chapter of his book on the *Architecture of North Italy*.

church of Samminiato, near Florence [about 1013], and the cathedral of Pisa [begun 1063], not to mention other less eminent examples at Lucca and Pistoja, are sufficient evidences that in the darkest period of the Middle Ages the Italians were aiming at an architectural Renaissance. The influence of classical models is apparent both in the construction and the detail of these basilicas; while the deeply grounded preference of the Italian genius for round arches, for colonnades of pillars and pilasters, and for large rectangular spaces, with low roofs and shallow tribunes, finds full satisfaction in these original and noble buildings. It is impossible to refrain from deploring that the Romanesque of Tuscany should have been checked in its development by the intrusion of the German Gothic. Had it run its course unthwarted, a national style suited to the temperament of the people might have been formed, and much that was pedantic in the revival of the fifteenth century have been obviated.

The place of Gothic architecture in Italy demands fuller treatment. It was due partly to the direct influence of German emperors, partly to the imperial sympathies of the great nobles, partly to the Franciscan friars, who aimed at building large churches cheaply, and partly to the admiration excited by the grandeur of the Pointed style as it prevailed in Northern Europe, that Gothic—so alien to the Italian genius and climate—took root, spread widely, and flourished freely for a season. In thus enumerating the conditions favourable to the spread of Gottico-Tedesco, I am far from wishing to assert that this style was purely foreign. Italy, in common with the rest of Europe, passed by a natural process of evolution from the Romanesque to the Pointed manner, and treated the latter with an originality that proves a certain natural assimilation. Yet the first Gothic church, that of S. Francis at Assisi, was designed by a German; the most

splendid, that of Our Lady at Milan, is emphatically German.[1] During the comparatively brief period of Gothic ascendency the Italians never forgot their Latin and Lombard sympathies. The mood of mind in which they Gothicised was partial and transient. The evolution of this style was, therefore, neither so spontaneous and simple, nor yet so uninterrupted and complete, in Italy as in the North. While it produced the church of S. Francesco at Assisi and the cathedrals of Siena, Orvieto, Lucca, Bologna, Florence, and Milan, together with the town-halls of Perugia, Siena, and Florence, it failed to take firm hold upon the national taste, and died away before the growing passion for antiquity that restored the Italians to a sense of their own intellectual greatness. It is clear that, as soon as they were conscious of their vocation to revive the culture of the classic age, they at once and for ever abandoned the style appropriate to northern feudalism. They seem to have adopted it half-unwillingly and to have understood it only in the imperfect way in which they comprehended chivalry.

The Italians never rightly apprehended the specific nature of Gothic architecture. They could not forget the horizontal lines, flat roofs, and blank walls of the Basilica. Like their Roman ancestors, they aimed at covering the ground with the smallest possible expenditure of construction; to enclose large spaces within simple limits was their first object, and the effect of beauty or sublimity was gained by the proportions given to the total area. When, therefore, they adopted the Gothic style, they failed to perceive that its true merit consists in the negation of nearly all that the Latin style holds precious. Horizontal lines are as far as possible annihilated; walls are lost in windows; aisles and columns,

[1] Even though it be now proved that not Heinrich von Gmunden, but Marco Frisone da Campione, not a German, but a Milanese, was the first architect, this is none the less true about its style

apses and chapels, are multiplied with a view to complexity of architectonic effect; flat roofs become intolerable. The whole force employed in the construction has an upward tendency, and the spire is the completion of the edifice; for to the spire its countless soaring lines—lines not of stationary strength, but of ascendent growth—converge. All this the Italians were slow to comprehend. The campanile, for example, never became an integral part of their buildings. It stood alone, and was reserved for its original purpose of keeping the bells. The windows, for a reason very natural in Italy, where there is rather too much than too little sunlight, were curtailed; and instead of the multiplied bays and clustered columns of a northern Gothic aisle, the nave of so vast a church as S. Petronio at Bologna is measured by six arches raised on simple piers. The façade of an Italian cathedral was studied as a screen, quite independently of its relation to the interior; in the beautiful church of Crema, for example, the moon at night looks through the upper windows of a frontispiece raised far above the low roof of the nave. For the total effect of the exterior, as will be apparent to anyone who observes the Duomo of Orvieto from behind, no thought was taken. In this way the Italians missed the point and failed to perceive the poetry of Gothic architecture. Its symbolical significance was lost upon them; perhaps we ought to say that the Italian temperament, in art as in religion, was incapable of assimilating the vague yet powerful mysticism of the Teutonic races.

On the other hand, what they sacrificed of genuine Gothic character, was made good after their own fashion. Surface decoration, whether of fresco or mosaic, bronze-work or bas-relief, wood-carving or panelling in marble, baked clay or enamelled earthenware was never carried to such perfection in Gothic buildings of the purer type; nor had sculpture in the North an equal chance of detaching itself from the niche

and tabernacle, which forced it to remain the slave of architecture. Thus the comparative defects of Italian Gothic were directly helpful in promoting those very arts for which the people had a genius unrivalled among modern nations.

It is only necessary to contrast the two finest cathedrals of this style, those of Siena and Orvieto, with two such buildings as the cathedrals of Rheims and Salisbury, in order to perceive the structural inferiority of the former, as well as their superiority for all subordinate artistic purposes. Long straight lines, low roofs, narrow windows, a façade of surprising splendour but without a strict relation to the structure of the nave and aisles, a cupola surmounting the intersection of nave, choir, and transepts; simple tribunes at the east end, a detached campanile, round columns instead of clustered piers, a mixture of semicircular and pointed arches; these are some of the most salient features of the Sienese Duomo. But the material is all magnificent; and the hand, obedient to the dictates of an artist's brain, has made itself felt on every square foot of the building. Alternate courses of white and black marble, cornices loaded with grave or animated portraits of the Popes, sculptured shrines, altars, pulpits, reliquaries, fonts and holy-water vases, panels of inlaid wood and pictured pavements, bronze candelabra and wrought-iron screens, gilding and colour and precious work of agate and lapis lazuli—the masterpieces of men famous each in his own line—delight the eye in all directions. The whole church is a miracle of richness, a radiant and glowing triumph of inventive genius, the product of a hundred master-craftsmen toiling through successive centuries to do their best. All its countless details are so harmonised by the controlling taste, so brought together piece by piece in obedience to artistic instinct, that the total effect is ravishingly beautiful. Yet it is clear that no one paramount idea, determining and organising all these marvels, existed in the mind of the first architect. In true Gothic work the

details that make up the charm of this cathedral would have been subordinated to one architectonic thought; they would not have been suffered to assert their individuality, or to contribute, except as servants, to the whole effect. The northern Gothic church is like a body with several members; the southern Gothic church is an accretion of beautiful atoms. The northern Gothic style corresponds to the national unity of federalised races, organised by a social hierarchy of mutually dependent classes. In the southern Gothic style we find a mirror of political diversity, independent personality, burgher-like equality, despotic will. Thus the specific qualities of Italy on her emergence from the Middle Ages may be traced by no undue exercise of the fancy in her monuments. They are emphatically the creation of citizens—of men, to use Giannotti's phrase, distinguished by alternating obedience and command, not ranked beneath a monarchy, but capable themselves of sovereign power.[1]

What has been said of Siena is no less true of the Duomo of Orvieto. Though it seems to aim at a severer Gothic, and though the façade is more architecturally planned, a single glance at the exterior of the edifice shows that the builders had no lively sense of the requirements of the style they used. What can be more melancholy than those blank walls, broken by small round recesses protruding from the side chapels of the nave, those gaunt and barren angles at the east end, and those few pinnacles appended at a venture? It is clear that the spirit of the northern Gothic manner has been wholly misconceived. On the other hand, the interior is noble. The feeling for space possessed by the architect has expressed itself in proportions large and solemn; the area enclosed, though somewhat cold and vacuous to northern taste, is at least impressive by its severe harmony. But the real attractions of the church are isolated details. Wherever

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 153.

the individual artist-mind has had occasion to emerge, there our gaze is riveted, our criticism challenged, our admiration won. The frescoes of Signorelli, the bas-reliefs of the Pisani, the statuary of Lo Scalza and Mosca, the tarsia of the choir stalls, the Alexandrine work and mosaics of the façade, the bronzes placed upon its brackets, and the wrought acanthus scrolls of its superb pilasters—these are the objects for inexhaustible wonder in the cathedral of Orvieto. On approaching a building of this type, we must abandon our conceptions of organic architecture: only the Greek and northern Gothic styles deserve that epithet. We must not seek for severe discipline and architectonic design. Instead of one presiding, all-determining idea, we must be prepared to welcome a wealth of separate beauties, wrought out by men of independent genius, whereby each part is made a masterpiece, and many diverse elements become a whole of picturesque rather than architectural impressiveness.

It would not be difficult to extend this kind of criticism to the Duomo of Milan. Speaking strictly, a more unlucky combination of different styles—the pyramidal façade of Lombard architecture and the long thin lights of German Gothic, for example—a clumsier misuse of ill-appropriated details in the heavy piers of the nave, or a more disastrous adjustment of the monster windows to the main lines of the nave and aisles, could scarcely be imagined. Yet no other church, perhaps, in Europe leaves the same impression of the marvellous upon the fancy. The splendour of its pure white marble, blushing with the rose of evening or of dawn, radiant in noonday sunlight, and fabulously fairy-like beneath the moon and stars, the multitudes of statues sharply cut against a clear blue sky, and gazing at the Alps across that memorable tract of plain, the immense space and light-irradiated gloom of the interior, the deep tone of the bells above at a vast distance, and the gorgeous colours of

the painted glass, contribute to a scenical effect unparalleled in Christendom.

The two styles, Lombard and Gothic, of which I have been speaking, were both in a certain sense exotic. Within the great cities the pith of the population was Latin; and no style of building that did not continue the tradition of the Romans, in the spirit of the Roman manner, and with strict observance of its details, satisfied them. It was a main feature of the Renaissance that, when the Italians undertook the task of reuniting themselves by study with the past, they abandoned all other forms of architecture, and did their best to create one in harmony with the relics of Latin monuments. To trace the history of this revived classic architecture will occupy me later in this chapter; but for the moment it is necessary to turn aside and consider briefly the secular buildings of Italy before the date of the Renaissance proper.

About the same time that the cathedrals were being built, the nobles filled the towns with fortresses. These at first were gaunt and unsightly; how overcrowded with tall bare towers a mediæval Italian city could be, is still shown by San Gemignano, the only existing instance where the *torroni* have been left untouched.[1] In course of time, when the aristocracy came to be fused with the burghers, and public order was maintained by law in the great cities, these forts made way for spacious palaces. The temper of the citizens in each place and the local character of artistic taste determined the specific features of domestic as of ecclesiastical architecture. Though it is hard to define what are the social differences expressed by the large quadrangles of Francesco Sforza's hospital at Milan, and the heavy cube of the Riccardi palace at Florence, we feel that the *genius loci* has in each case

[1] Pavia, it may be mentioned, has still many towers standing, and the two at Bologna are famous.

controlled the architect. The sunny spaces of the one building, with its terra-cotta traceries of birds and grapes and Cupids, contrast with the stern brown mouldings and impenetrable solidity of the other. That the one was raised by the munificence of a sovereign in his capital, while the other was the dwelling of a burgher in a city proud of its antique sobriety, goes some way to explain the difference. In like manner the court-life of a dynastic principality produced the castle of Urbino, so diverse in its style and adaptation from the ostentatious mansions of the Genoese merchants. It is not fanciful to say that the civic life of a free and factious republic is represented by the heavy walls and narrow windows of Florentine dwelling-places. In their rings of iron, welded between rock and rock about the basement, as though for the beginning of a barricade—in their torch-rests of wrought metal, gloomy portals and dimly-lighted courts, we trace the habits of caution and reserve that marked the men who led the parties of Uberti and Albizzi. The Sienese palaces are lighter and more elegant in style, as belonging to a people proverbially pleasure-loving; while a still more sumptuous and secure mode of life finds expression in the open loggie and spacious staircases of Venice. The graceful buildings which overhang the Grand Canal are exactly fitted for an oligarchy, sure of its own authority and loved of the people. Feudal despotism, on the contrary, reigns in the heart of Ferrara, where the Este's stronghold, moated, drawbridged, and portcullised, casting dense shadow over the water that protects the dungeons, still seems to threaten the public square and overawe the homes of men.

To the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, again, we owe the town halls and public palaces that form so prominent a feature in the city architecture of Italy. The central vitality of once powerful States is symbolised in the *broletti* of the Lombard cities, dusty and abandoned now in spite

of their clear-cut terra-cotta traceries. There is something strangely melancholy in their desolation. Wandering through the vast hall of the Ragione at Padua, where the very shadows seem asleep as they glide over the wide unpeopled floor, it is not easy to remember that this was once the theatre of eager intrigues, ere the busy stir of the old burgh was utterly extinguished. Few of these public palaces have the good fortune to be distinguished, like that of the Doge at Venice, by world-historical memories and by works of art as yet unrivalled. The spirit of the Venetian Republic still lives in that unique building. Architects may tell us that its Gothic arcades are melodramatic; sculptors may depreciate the decorative work of Sansovino; painters may assert that the genius of Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese shines elsewhere with greater lustre. Yet the poet clings with ever-deepening admiration to the sea-born palace of the ancient mistress of the sea, and the historian feels that here, as at Athens, art has made the past towards which he looks eternal.

Two other great Italian houses of the Commonwealth, rearing their towers above the town for tocsin and for ward, owe immortality to their intrinsic beauty. These are the Palazzo Pubblico of Siena and the Palazzo Vecchio of Florence. Few buildings in Europe are more picturesquely fascinating than the palace of Siena, with its outlook over hill and dale to cloud-capped Monte Amiata. Yet, in spite of its unparalleled position on the curved and sloping piazza, where the *contrade* of Siena have run their *palio* for centuries, this palace lacks the vivid interest attaching to the home Arnolfo raised at Florence for the rulers of his native city. During their term of office the Priors never quitted the Palace of the Signory. All deliberations on state affairs took place within its walls, and its bell was the pulse that told how the heart of Florence throbbed. The architect of this huge mass of masonry was Arnolfo del Cambio, one of the greatest

builders of the Middle Ages, a man who may be called the Michael Angelo of the thirteenth century.[1] In 1298 he was ordered to erect a dwelling-place for the Commonwealth, to the end that the people might be protected in their fortress from the violence of the nobles. The building of the palace and the levelling of the square around it were attended with circumstances that bring forcibly before our minds the stern conditions of republican life in mediæval Italy. A block of houses had to be bought from the family of Foraboschi; and their tower, called Torre della Vacca, was raised and turned into the belfry of the Priors. There was not room enough, however, to construct the palace itself with right angles, unless it were extended into the open space where once had stood the houses of the Uberti, 'traitors to Florence and Ghibellines.' In destroying these, the burghers had decreed that thenceforth for ever the feet of men should pass where the hearths of the proscribed nobles once had blazed. Arnolfo begged that he might trespass on this site; but the people refused permission. Where the traitors' nest had been, there the sacred foundations of the public house should not be laid. Consequently the Florentine Palazzo is, was, and will be cramped of its correct proportions.[2]

No Italian architect has enjoyed the proud privilege of stamping his own individuality more strongly on his native city than Arnolfo; and for this reason it may be permitted to enlarge upon his labours here. When we take our stand upon the hill of Samminiato, the Florence at our feet owes her physiognomy in a great measure to this man. The tall

[1] Arnolfo was born in 1232 at Colle, in the Val d'Elsa. He was a sculptor as well as architect, the assistant of Niccola Pisano at Siena, and the maker of the tomb of Cardinal de Braye at Orvieto. This tomb is remarkable as the earliest instance of the canopy withdrawn by attendant angels from the dead man's form, afterwards so frequently adopted by the Pisan school.

[2] Giov. Villani, viii. 26.

tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, the bulk of the Duomo, and the long low oblong mass of Santa Croce are all his. His too are the walls that define the city of flowers from the gardens round about her.[1] Even the master-works of his successors subordinate their beauty to his first conception. Giotto's campanile, Brunelleschi's cupola, and Orcagna's church of Orsammichele, in spite of their undoubted and authentic originality, are placed where he had planned.

In 1294 the Florentines determined to rebuild their mother-church upon a scale of unexampled grandeur. The commission given to their architect displays so strikingly the lordly spirit in which these burghers set about the work, that, though it has been often quoted, a portion of the document shall be recited here. 'Since the highest mark of prudence in a people of noble origin is to proceed in the management of their affairs so that their magnanimity and wisdom may be evinced in their outward acts, we order Arnolfo, head-master of our commune, to make a design for the renovation of Santa Reparata in a style of magnificence which neither the industry nor the power of man can surpass, that it may harmonise with the opinion of many wise persons in this city and state, who think that this commune should not engage in any enterprise unless its intention be to make the result correspond with that noblest sort of heart which is composed of the united will of many citizens.'[2] From Giovanni Villani we learn what taxes were levied by the Wool-Guild, and set apart in 1331 for the completion of the building. They were raised upon all goods bought or sold within the city in two separate rates, the net produce amounting in the first year to 2,000

[1] See Milizia, vol. i. p. 135. These walls were not finished till some time after Arnolfo's death. They lost their ornament of towers in the siege of 1529, and they are now being rapidly destroyed.

[2] From Perkins's *Tuscan Sculptors*, vol. i. p 54. A recent work by Signor C. J. Cavallucci, entitled *S. Maria del Fiore*, Firenze, 1881, has created a revolution in our knowledge regarding this church

lire.[1] The cathedral designed by Arnolfo was of vast dimensions: it covers 84,802 feet, while that of Cologne covers 81,461 feet; and, says Fergusson, 'as far as mere conception of plan goes, there can be little doubt but that the Florentine cathedral far surpasses its German rival.'[2] Nothing, indeed, can be imagined more noble than the scheme of this huge edifice. Studying its ground-plan, and noting how the nave unfolds into a mighty octagon, which in its turn displays three well-proportioned apses, we are induced to think that a sublimer thought has never been expressed in stone. At this point, however, our admiration receives a check. In the execution of the parts the builder dwarfed what had been conceived on so magnificent a scale; aiming at colossal simplicity, he failed to secure the multiplicity of subordinated members essential to the total effect of size. 'Like all inexperienced architects, he seems to have thought that greatness of parts would add to the greatness of the whole, and in consequence used only four great arches in the whole length of his nave, giving the central aisle a width of fifty-five feet clear. The whole width is within ten feet of that of Cologne, and the height about the same; and yet, in appearance, the height is about half, and the breadth less than half, owing to the better proportion of the parts and to the superior appropriateness in the details on the part of the German cathedral.'[3] The truth of these remarks will be felt by every one on whom the ponderous vacuity of the interior has weighed. Other notable defects there are too in this building, proceeding chiefly from the Italian misconception of Gothic style. The windows are few and narrow, so that little light even at noonday struggles through them; and broad barren spaces of grey walls oppress the eye. Externally the whole church is panelled with parti-coloured marbles, according to Florentine

[1] Giov. Villani, x. 192.

[2] *Illustrated Handbook of Architecture*, book vi. chap. i. [3] *Ib.*

custom; but this panelling bears no relation to the structure: it is so much surface decoration possessing value chiefly for the colourist. Arnolfo died before the dome, as he designed it, could be placed upon the octagon, and nothing is known for certain about the form he meant it to assume. It seems, however, probable that he intended to adopt something similar to the dome of Chiaravalle, which ends, after a succession of narrowing octagons, in a slender conical pyramid.[1] Subordinate spires would then have been placed at each of the four angles where the nave and transepts intersect; and the whole external effect, for richness and variety, would have outrivalled that of any European building. It is well known that the erection of the dome was finally entrusted to Brunelleschi in 1420. Arnolfo's church now sustains in air an octagonal cupola of the simplest possible design, in height and size rivalling that of S. Peter's. It was thus that the genius of the Renaissance completed what the genius of the Middle Ages had begun. But in Italy there was no real break between the two periods. Though Arnolfo employed the Pointed style in his design, we find nothing genuinely Gothic in the church. It has no pinnacles, flying buttresses, side chapels, or subordinate supports. To use the phrase of Michelet, who has chosen the dramatic episode of Brunelleschi's intervention in the rearing of the dome for a parable of the Renaissance, 'the colossal church stood up simply, naturally, as a strong man in the morning rises from his bed without the need of staff or crutch.'[2] This indeed is the glory of

[1] See Grüner's *Terra Cotta Architecture of North Italy*, plates 3 and 4.

[2] Compare what Alberti says in his preface to the Treatise on Painting, *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 12. 'Chi mai sì duro e sì invido non lodasse Pippo architetto vedendo quì struttura sì grande, erta sopra i cieli, ampla da coprire con sua ombra tutti i popoli toscani, fatta sanza alcuno aiuto di travamenti o di copia di legname, quale artificio certo, se io ben giudico, come a questi tempi era incredibile potersi, così forse appresso gli antiqui fu non saputo nè conosciuto?

Italian as compared with Northern architecture. The Italians valued the strength of simple perspicuity: all the best works of their builders are geometrical ideas of the purest kind translated into stone. It is, however, true that the gain of vast aërial space was hardly sufficient to compensate for the impression of emptiness they leave upon the senses. We feel this very strongly when we study the model prepared by Bramante's pupil, Cristoforo Rocchi, for the cathedral of Pavia; yet here we see the neo-Latin genius of the Italian artist working freely in an element exactly suited to his powers. When the same order of genius sought to express its conception through the language of the Gothic style, the result was invariably defective.[1]

The classical revival of the fifteenth century made itself immediately felt in architecture; and Brunelleschi's visit to Rome in 1403 may be fixed as the date of the Renaissance in this art. Gothic, as we have already seen, was an alien in Italy. Its importation from the North had checked the free development of national architecture, which in the eleventh century began at Pisa by a conscious return to classic details. But the reign of Gothic was destined to be brief. Petrarch and Boccaccio, as I showed in my last volume, turned the whole intellectual energy of the Florentines into the channels of Latin and Greek scholarship.[2] The ancient world absorbed all interests, and the Italians with one will shook themselves free of the mediæval style they never

[1] What the church of S. Petronio at Bologna would have been, if it had been completed on the scale contemplated, can hardly be imagined. As it stands, it is immense, and coldly bare in its immensity. Yet the present church is but the nave of a temple designed with transepts and choir. The length was to have been 800 feet, the width of the transepts 525, the dome 183 feet in diameter. A building so colossal in extent, and so monotonously meagre in conception, could not but have been a failure.

[2] Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, chap. i.

rightly understood, and which they henceforth stigmatised as barbarous.[1]

The problem that occupied all the Renaissance architects was how to restore the manner of ancient Rome as far as possible, adapting it to the modern requirements of ecclesiastical, civic, and domestic buildings. Of Greek art they knew comparatively nothing: nor indeed could Greek architecture have offered for their purpose the same plastic elements as Roman—itself a derived style, admitting of easier adjustment to modern uses than the inflexibly pure art of Greece. At the same time they possessed but imperfect fragments of Roman work. The ruins of baths, theatres, tombs, temple-fronts, and triumphal arches, were of little immediate assistance in the labour of designing churches and palaces. All that the architects could do, after familiarising themselves with the remains of ancient Rome, and assimilating the spirit of Roman art, was to clothe their own inventions with classic details. The form and structure of their edifices were modern; the parts were copied from antique models. A want of organic unity and structural sincerity is always the result of those necessities under which a secondary and adapted style must labour; and thus the pseudo-Roman buildings even of the best Renaissance period display faults similar to those of the Italian Gothic. While they are remarkable for grandeur of effect in all that concerns the distribution of light and shade, the covering and enclosing of space, and the disposition of masses, they show

[1] The following passage quoted from Milizia, *Memorie degli Architetti*, Parma, 1781, vol. i. p. 135, illustrates the contemptuous attitude of Italian critics to Gothic architecture. After describing Arnolfo's building of the Florentine Duomo, he proceeds: 'In questo Architetto si vide qualche leggiero barlume di buona Architettura, come di Pittura in Cimabue suo contemporaneo. Ma in tutte le cose e fisiche e morali i passaggi si fanno per insensibili gradagioni; onde per lungo tempo ancora si mantenne il corrotto gusto, che si può chiamare Arabo-Tedesco.'

at best but a superficial correspondence between the borrowed forms and the construction these are used to mask.[1] The edifices of this period abound in more or less successful shams, in surface decoration more or less pleasing to the eye; their real greatness, meanwhile, consists in the feeling for spatial proportions and for linear harmonies possessed by their architects.

Three periods in the development of Renaissance architecture may be roughly marked.[2] The first, extending from 1420 to 1500, is the age of experiment and of luxuriant inventiveness. The second embraces the first forty years of the sixteenth century. The most perfect buildings of the Italian Renaissance were produced within this short space of time. The third, again comprising about forty years, from 1540 to 1580, leads onward to the reign of mannerism and exaggeration, called by the Italians *barocco*. In itself the third period is distinguished by a scrupulous purism bordering upon pedantry, strict adherence to theoretical rules, and sacrifice of inventive qualities to established canons. To do more than briefly indicate the masterpieces of these three periods, would be impossible in a work that does not pretend to treat of architecture exhaustively: and yet to omit all notice of the builders of this age and of their styles, would be to neglect the most important art-phase of the time I have undertaken to illustrate.

In the first period we are bewildered by the luxuriance of creative powers and by the rioting of the fancy in all forms of beauty indiscriminately mingled. In general we detect a striving after effects not fully realised, and a tendency to indulge in superfluous ornament without regard for strictness

[1] Observe, for example, the casing of a Gothic church at Rimini by Alberti with a series of Roman arches; or the façade of S. Andrea at Mantua, where the vast and lofty central arch leads, not into the nave itself, but into a shallow vestibule.

[2] See Burckhardt, *Cicerone*, vol. i. p. 167.

of design. The imperfect comprehension of classical models and the exuberant vivacity of the imagination in the fifteenth century account for the florid work of this time. Something too is left of mediæval fancy; the details borrowed from the antique undergo fantastic transmutation at the hands of men accustomed to the vehement emotion of the romantic ages. Whatever the Renaissance took from antique art, it was at first unable to assimilate either the moderation of the Greeks or the practical sobriety of the Romans. Christianity had deepened and intensified the sources of imaginative life; and just as reminiscences of classic style impaired Italian Gothic, so now a trace of Gothic is perceptible in the would-be classic work of the Revival. The result of these combined influences was a wonderful and many-featured hybrid, best represented in one monument by the façade of the Certosa at Pavia. While characterising the work of the earlier Renaissance as fused of divers manners, we must not forget that it was truly living, full of purpose, and according to its own standard sincere. It was a new birth; no mere repetition of something dead and gone, but the product of vivid forces stirred to original creativeness by admiration for the past. It corresponded, moreover, with exquisite exactitude to the halting of the conscience between Christianity and Paganism, and to the blent beauty that the poets loved. On reeds dropped from the hands of dead Pan the artists of this period, each in his own sphere, piped ditties of romance.

To these general remarks upon the style of the first period the Florentine architects offer an exception; and yet the first marked sign of a new era in the art of building was given at Florence. Purity of taste and firmness of judgment, combined with scientific accuracy, were always distinctive of Florentines. To such an extent did these qualities determine their treatment of the arts that acute critics have been found to tax them—and in my opinion justly—with hardness and

frigidity.[1] Brunelleschi in 1425 designed the basilica of S. Lorenzo after an original but truly classic type, remarkable for its sobriety and correctness. What he had learned from the ruins of Rome he here applied in obedience to his own artistic instinct. S. Lorenzo is a columnar edifice with round arches and semicircular apses. Not a form or detail in the whole church is strictly speaking at variance with Roman precedent; and yet the general effect resembles nothing we possess of antique work. It is a masterpiece of intelligent Renaissance adaptation. The same is true of S. Spirito, built in 1470, after Brunelleschi's death, according to his plans. The extraordinary capacity of this great architect will, however, win more homage from ordinary observers when they contemplate the Pitti Palace and the cupola of the cathedral. Both of these are masterworks of personal originality. What is Roman in the Pitti Palace, is the robust simplicity of massive strength; but it is certain that no patrician of the republic or the empire inhabited a house at all resembling this. The domestic habits of the Middle Ages, armed for self-defence, and on guard against invasion from without, still find expression in the solid bulk of this forbidding dwelling-place, although its majesty and largeness show that the reign of milder and more courtly manners has begun. To speak of the cupola of the Duomo in connection with a simple revival of Roman taste, would be equally inappropriate. It remains a *tour de force* of individual genius, cultivated by the experience of Gothic vault-building, and penetrated with the greatness of imperial Rome. Its spirit of dauntless audacity and severe concentration alone is antique.

Almost contemporary with Brunelleschi was Leo Battista Alberti, a Florentine, who, working upon somewhat different principles, sought more closely to reproduce the actual

[1] See De Stendhal, *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*, p. 122.

elements of Roman architecture.[1] In his remodelling of S. Francesco at Rimini the type he followed was that of the triumphal arch, and what was finished of that wonderful façade, remains to prove how much might have been made of well-proportioned pilasters and nobly curved arcades.[2] The same principle is carried out in S. Andrea at Mantua. The frontispiece of this church is a gigantic arch of triumph; the interior is noticeable for its simple harmony of parts, adopted from the vaulted baths of Rome. The combination of these antique details in an imposing structure implied a high imaginative faculty at a moment when the rules of classic architecture had not been as yet reduced to method. Yet the weakness of Alberti's principle is revealed when we consider that here the lofty central arch of the façade serves only for a decoration. Too high and spacious even for the chariots of a Roman triumph, it forms an inappropriate entrance to the modest vestibule of a Christian church.

Like Brunelleschi, Alberti applied his talents to the building of a palace in Florence that became a model to subsequent architects. The Palazzo Rucellai retains many details of the mediæval Tuscan style, especially in the windows divided by slender pilasters. But the three orders introduced by way of surface decoration, the doorways, and the cornices, are transcripts from Roman ruins. This building, one of the most beautiful in Italy, was copied by Francesco di Giorgio and Bernardo Fiorentino for the palaces they constructed at Pienza.

This was the age of sumptuous palace-building; and for no purpose was the early Renaissance style better adapted than for the erection of dwelling-houses that should match

[1] For a notice of his life, see Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, p. 247.

[2] The Arch of Augustus at Rimini was the model followed by Alberti in this façade. He intended to cover the church with a cupola, as may be seen from the design on a medal of Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta. See too the letter written by him to Matteo da Bastia, Alberti, *Opere*, vol. iv. p. 397.

the free and worldly splendour of those times. The just medium between mediæval massiveness and classic simplicity was attained in countless buildings beautiful and various beyond description. Bologna is full of them; and Urbino, in the Ducal Palace, contains one specimen unexampled in extent and unique in interest. Yet here, as in all departments of fine art, Florence takes the lead. After Brunelleschi and Alberti came Michellozzo, the favourite architect of Cosimo de' Medici; Benedetto da Majano; Giuliano and Antonio di San Gallo; and Il Cronaca. Cosimo de' Medici, having said that 'envy is a plant no man should water,' denied himself the monumental house designed by Brunelleschi, and chose instead the modest plan of Michellozzo. Brunelleschi had meant to build the Casa Medici along one side of the Piazza di S. Lorenzo; but when Cosimo refused his project, he broke up the model he had made, to the great loss of students of this age of architecture. Michellozzo was then commissioned to raise the mighty, but comparatively humble, Riccardi Palace at the corner of the Via Larga, which continued to be the residence of the Medici through all their chequered history, until at last they took possession of the Palazzo Pitti.[1] The most beautiful of all Florentine dwelling-houses designed at this period is that which Benedetto da Majano built for Filippo Strozzi. Combining the burgher-like austerity of antecedent ages with a grandeur and a breadth of style peculiar to the Renaissance, the Palazzo Strozzi may be chosen as the perfect type of Florentine domestic architecture.[2] Other cities were

[1] This ancestral palace of the Medici passed in 1659 to the Marchese Gabriele Riccardi, from the Duke Francesco II.

[2] Von Reumont, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, vol. ii. pp. 187–191, may be consulted for an interesting account of the building of this *Casa Grande* by Filippo Strozzi. The preparations were made with great caution, lest it should seem that a work too magnificent for a simple citizen was being undertaken; in particular, Filippo so contrived that the costly *opus rusticum* employed in the construction of the basement should

supplied by Florence with builders, and Milan owed her fanciful Ospedale Maggiore at this epoch to Antonio Filarete, a Florentine. This great edifice illustrates the emancipation from fixed rule that distinguishes much of the architecture of the earlier Renaissance. The detail is not unfrequently Gothic, especially in the pointed windows; but the feeling of the whole structure, in its airy space and lightness, delicate terra-cotta mouldings, and open loggie, is truly Cinque Cento.[1]

In no other style than this of the earlier Renaissance is the builder more inseparably connected with the decorator. The labours of the stone-carver, who provided altars chased with Scripture histories in high relief, pulpits hung against a column of the nave, tombs with canopies and floral garlands, organ galleries enriched with bas-reliefs of singing boys, ciboria with kneeling and adoring angels, marble tabernacles for relics, vases for holy water, fonts and fountains, and all the indescribable wealth of scrolls and friezes around doors and screens and balustrades that fence the choir, are added to those of the bronze-founder, with his mighty doors and pendent lamps, his candelabra sustained by angels, torch-rests and rings, embossed basements for banners of state, and portraits of recumbent senators or prelates.[2] The wood-carver con-

appear to have been forced upon him. This is characteristic of Florence in the days of Cosimo. The foundation stone was laid in the morning of August 16, 1489, at the moment when the sun arose above the summits of the Casentino. The hour, prescribed by astrologers as propitious, had been settled by the horoscope; masses meanwhile were said in several churches, and alms distributed.

[1] Antonio Filarete, or Averulino, architect and sculptor, was author of a treatise on the building of the ideal city, one of the most curious specimens of Renaissance fancy, to judge from the account rendered of the manuscript by Rio, vol. iii. pp. 321–328.

[2] Matteo Civitale, Benedetto da Majano, Mino da Fiesole, Luca della Robbia, Donatello, Jacopo della Quercia, Lo Scalza, Omodeo, and the Sansovini, not to mention less illustrious sculptors, filled the churches of Italy with this elaborate stone-work. Among the bronze-founders it is enough to name Ghiberti, Antonio Filarete, Antonio Pollajuolo,

tributes *tarsia* like that of Fra Giovanni da Verona.[1] The worker in wrought iron welds such screens as guard the chapel of the Sacra Cintola at Prato. The Robbias prepare their delicately-toned reliefs for the lunettes above the doorways. Modellers in clay produce the terra-cotta work of the Certosa, or the carola of angels who surround the little cupola behind the church of S. Eustorgio at Milan.[2] Meanwhile mosaics are provided for the dome or let into the floor;[3] agates and marbles and lapis lazuli are pieced together for altar fronts and panellings;[4] stalls are carved into fantastic patterns, and heavy roofs are embossed with figures of the saints and armorial emblems.[5] Tapestry is woven from the designs of

Donatello and his pupil Bertoldo, Andrea Riccio, the master of the candelabrum in S. Antonio at Padua, Jacopo Sansovino, the master of the door of the sacristy in S. Mark's at Venice, Alessandro Leopardi, the master of the standard-pedestals of the Piazza of S. Mark's. I do not mean these lists to be in any sense exhaustive, but simply to remind the reader of the rare and many-sided men of genius who devoted their abilities to this kind of work. Some of their masterpieces will be noticed in detail in the chapter on Sculpture.

[1] Especially his work at Monte Oliveto, near Siena, and in the church of Monte Oliveto at Naples. The Sala del Cambio at Perugia may also be cited as rich in tarsia-work designed by Perugino, while the church of S. Pietro de' Cassinensi outside the city is a museum of masterpieces executed by Fra Damiano da Bergamo and Stefano da Bergamo from designs of Raphael. Not less beautiful are the inlaid wood panels in the Palace of Urbino, by Maestro Giacomo of Florence.

[2] The churches and palaces of Lombardy are peculiarly rich in this kind of decoration. The façade of the Oratory of S. Bernardino at Perugia, designed and executed by Agostino di Duccio, is a masterpiece of rare beauty in this style.

[3] Not to mention the Renaissance mosaics of S. Mark's at Venice, the cupola of S. Maria del Popolo at Rome, executed in mosaic by Raphael, deserves special mention. A work illustrative of this cupola is one of Ludwig Grüner's best publications.

[4] South Italy and Florence are distinguished by two marked styles in this decoration of inlaid marbles or *opera di commesso*. Compare the Medicean chapel in S. Lorenzo, for instance, with the high altar of the cathedral of Messina.

[5] The roof of the Duomo at Volterra is a fine specimen.

excellent masters;[1] great painters contribute arabesques of fresco or of stucco mixed with gilding, and glass is coloured from the outlines of such draughtsmen as Ghiberti.

Some of the decorative elements I have hastily enumerated, will be treated in connection with the respective arts of sculpture and painting. The fact, meanwhile, deserves notice that they received a new development in relation to architecture during the first period of the Renaissance, and that they formed, as it were, an integral part of its main æsthetical purpose. Strip a chapel of the fifteenth century of ornamental adjuncts, and an uninteresting shell is left: what, for instance, would the façades of the Certosa and the Cappella Colleoni be without their sculptured and inlaid marbles? The genius of the age found scope in subordinate details, and the most successful architect was the man who combined in himself a feeling for the capacities of the greatest number of associated arts. As the consequence of this profuse expenditure of loving care on every detail, the monuments of architecture belonging to the earlier Renaissance have a poetry that compensates for structural defects; just as its wildest literary extravagances—the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, for instance—have a charm of wanton fancy and young joy that atones to sympathetic students for intolerable pedantries.

In the second period the faults of the first group of Renaissance builders were in a large measure overcome, and their striving after the production of new yet classic form was more completely realised. The reckless employment of luxuriant decoration yielded to a chastened taste, without the sacrifice of beauty or magnificence. Style was refined; the construction of large buildings was better understood, and the instinct for what lies within the means of a revived and secondary manner was more true.

[1] It will not be forgotten that Raphael's cartoons were made for tapestry.

To Bramante must be assigned the foremost place among the architects of the golden age.[1] Though little of his work survives entire and unspoiled, it is clear that he exercised the profoundest influence over both successors and contemporaries. What they chiefly owed to him, was the proper subordination of beauty in details to the grandeur of simplicity and to unity of effect. He came at a moment when constructive problems had been solved, when mechanical means were perfected, and when the sister arts had reached their highest point. His early training in Lombardy accustomed him to the adoption of clustered piers instead of single columns, to semicircular apses and niches, and to the free use of minor cupolas—elements of design introduced neither by Brunelleschi nor by Alberti into the Renaissance style of Florence, but which were destined to determine the future of architecture for all Italy. Nature had gifted Bramante with calm judgment and refined taste; his sense of the right limitations of the pseudo-Roman style was exquisite, and his feeling for structural symmetry was just. If his manner strikes us as somewhat cold and abstract when compared with the more genial audacities of the earlier Renaissance, we must remember how salutary was the example of a rigorous and modest manner in an age which required above all things to be preserved from its own luxuriant waywardness of fancy. It is hard to say how much of the work ascribed to Bramante in Northern Italy is genuine; most of it, at any rate, belongs to the manner of his youth. The Church of S. Maria della Consolazione at Todi, the palace of the Cancelleria at Rome, and the unfinished cathedral of Pavia, enable us to comprehend the general character of this great architect's refined and

[1] Bramante Lazzari was born at Castel Durante, near Urbino, in 1444. He spent the early years of his architect's life in Lombardy, in the service of Lodovico Sforza, and came probably to Rome upon his patron's downfall in 1499.

noble manner. S. Peter's, it may be said in passing, retains, in spite of all subsequent modifications, many essentially Bramantesque features—especially in the distribution of the piers and rounded niches.

Bramante formed no school strictly so called, though his pupils, Cristoforo Rocchi and Ventura Vitoni, carried out his principles of building at Pavia and Pistoja. Vitoni's church of the Umiltà in the latter city is a pure example of conscientious neo-Roman architecture. It consists of a large octagon surmounted by a dome and preceded by a lofty vaulted atrium or vestibule. The single round arch of this vestibule repeats the *testudo* of a Roman bath, and the decorative details are accurately reproduced from similar monuments. Unfortunately, Giorgio Vasari, who was employed to finish the cupola, spoiled its effect by raising it upon an ugly attic; it is probable that the church, as designed by Vitoni, would have presented the appearance of a miniature Pantheon. At Rome the influence of Bramante was propagated through Raphael, Giulio Romano, and Baldassare Peruzzi. Raphael's claim to consideration as an architect rests upon the Palazzi Vidoni and Pandolfini, the Cappella Chigi in S. Maria del Popolo, and the Villa Madama. The last-named building, executed by Giulio Romano after Raphael's design, is carried out in a style so forcible as to make us fancy that the pupil had a larger share in its creation than his teacher. These works, however, sink into insignificance before the Palazzo del Te at Mantua, the masterpiece of Giulio's genius. This most noble of Italian pleasure-houses remains to show what the imagination of a poet-artist could recover from the splendour of old Rome and adapt to the use of his own age. The vaults of the Thermæ of Titus, with their cameos of stucco and frescoed arabesques, are here repeated on a scale and with an exuberance of invention that surpass the model. Open loggie yield fair prospect over what were once trim

gardens; spacious halls, adorned with frescoes in the vehement and gorgeous style of the Roman school, form a fit theatre for the grand parade-life of an Italian prince. The whole is Pagan in its pride and sensuality, its prodigality of strength and insolence of freedom. Having seen this palace, we do not wonder that the fame of Giulio flew across the Alps and lived upon the lips of Shakspere: for in his masterwork at Mantua he collected, as it were, and epitomised in one building all that enthralled the fancy of the Northern nations when they thought of Italy.

A pendant to the Palazzo del Te is the Villa Farnesina, raised on the banks of the Tiber by Baldassare Peruzzi for his fellow townsman Agostino Chigi of Siena. It is an idyll placed beside a lyric ode, gentler and quieter in style, yet full of grace, breathing the large and liberal spirit of enjoyment that characterised the age of Leo. The frescoes of Galatea and Psyche, executed by Raphael and his pupils, have made this villa famous in the annals of Italian painting. The memory of the Roman banker's splendid style of living marks it out as no less noteworthy in the history of Renaissance manners.[1]

Among the great edifices of this second period we may reckon Jacopo Sansovino's buildings at Venice, though they approximate rather to the style of the earlier Renaissance in all that concerns exuberance of decorative detail. The Venetians, somewhat behind the rest of Italy in the development of the fine arts, were at the height of prosperity and wealth during the middle period of the Renaissance; and no city is more rich in monuments of the florid style. Something of their own delight in sensuous magnificence they communicated even to the foreigners who dwelt among them. The court of the Ducal Palace, the Scuola di S. Rocco, the Palazzo Corner, and the Palazzo Vendramini-Calergi, illustrate

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 342.

the strong yet fanciful *bravura* style that pleased the aristocracy of Venice. Nowhere else does the architecture of the Middle Ages melt by more imperceptible degrees into that of the Revival, retaining through all changes the impress of a people splendour-loving in the highest sense. The Library of S. Mark, built by Sansovino in 1536, remains, however, the crowning triumph of Venetian art. It is impossible to contemplate its noble double row of open arches without feeling the eloquence of rhetoric so brilliant, without echoing the judgment of Palladio, that nothing more sumptuous or beautiful had been invented since the age of ancient Rome.

Time would fail to tell of all the architects who crowd the first half of the sixteenth century—of Antonio di San Gallo, famous for fortifications; of Baccio d'Agnolo, who raised the Campanile of S. Spirito at Florence; of Giovanni Maria Falconetto, to whose genius Padua owed so many princely edifices; of Michele Sanmicheli, the military architect of Verona, and the builder of five mighty palaces for the nobles of his native city. Yet the greatest name of all this period cannot be omitted: Michael Angelo must be added to the list of builders in the golden age. In architecture, as in sculpture, he not only bequeathed to posterity masterpieces of individual energy and original invention, in their kind unrivalled; but he also prepared for his successors a false way of working, and justified by his example the extravagances of the decadence. Without noticing the façade designed for S. Lorenzo at Florence, the transformation of the Baths of Diocletian into a church, the remodelling of the Capitoline buildings, and the continuation of the Palazzo Farnese—works that either exist only in drawings or have been confused by later alterations—it is enough here to mention the Sagrestia Nuova of S. Lorenzo and the cupola of S. Peter's. The sacristy may be looked on either as the masterpiece of a sculptor who required fit setting for his statues, or of an

architect who designed statues to enhance the structure he had planned. Both arts are used with equal ease, nor has the genius of Michael Angelo dealt more masterfully with the human frame than with the forms of Roman architecture in this chapel. He seems to have paid no heed to classic precedent, and to have taken no pains to adapt the parts to the structural purpose of the building. It was enough for him to create a wholly novel framework for the modern miracle of sculpture it enshrines, attending to such rules of composition as determine light and shade, and seeking by the slightness of mouldings and pilasters to enhance the terrible and massive forms that brood above the Medicean tombs. The result is a product of picturesque and plastic art, as true to the Michaelangelesque spirit as the Temple of the Wingless Victory to that of Pheidias. But where Michael Angelo achieved a triumph of boldness, lesser natures were betrayed into bizarrerie; and this chapel of the Medici, in spite of its grandiose simplicity, proved a stumbling-block to subsequent architects by encouraging them to despise propriety and violate the laws of structure. The same may be said with even greater truth of the Laurentian Library and its staircase. The false windows, repeated pillars, and barefaced aiming at effect, that mark the insincerity of the *barocco* style, are found here almost for the first time.

What S. Peter's would have been, if Michael Angelo had lived to finish it, can be imagined from his plans and elevations still preserved. It must always remain a matter of profound regret that his project was so far altered as to sacrifice the effect of the dome from the piazza. This dome is Michael Angelo's supreme achievement as an architect. It not only preserves all that is majestic in the cupola of Brunelleschi; but it also avoids the defects of its avowed model, by securing the entrance of abundant light, and dilating the imagination with the sense of space to soar

and float in. It is the dome that makes S. Peter's what it is—the adequate symbol of the Church in an age that had abandoned mediævalism and produced a new type of civility for the modern nations. On the connection between the building of S. Peter's and the Reformation I have touched already.[1] This mighty temple is the shrine of Catholicity, no longer cosmopolitan by right of spiritual empire, but secularised and limited to Latin races. At the same time it represents the spirit of a period when the Popes still led the world as intellectual chiefs. As the decree for its erection was the last act of the Papacy before the schism of the North had driven it into blind conflict with advancing culture, so S. Peter's remains the monument to after ages of a moment when the Roman Church, unterrified as yet by German rebels, dared to share the mundane impulse of the classical revival. She had forgotten the catacombs and ruthlessly destroyed the Basilica of Constantine. By rebuilding the mother church of Western Christianity upon a new plan, she broke with tradition; and if Rome has not ceased to be the Eternal City, if all ways are still leading to Rome, we may even hazard a conjecture that in the last days of their universal monarchy the Popes reared this fane to be the temple of a spirit alien to their own. It is at any rate certain that S. Peter's produces an impression less ecclesiastical, and less strictly Christian, than almost any of the elder and far humbler churches of Europe. Raised by proud and secular pontiffs in the heyday of renascent humanism, it seems to wait the time when the high priests of a religion no longer hostile to science or antagonistic to the inevitable force of progress will chaunt their hymns beneath its spacious dome.

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 344. See Gregorovius, *Geschichte der Stadt Rom*, vol. viii. p. 127, and the quotation there translated from Pallavicini's *History of the Council of Trent*.

The building of S. Peter's was so momentous in modern history, and so decisive for Italian architecture, that it may be permitted me to describe the vicissitudes through which the structure passed before reaching completion. Nicholas V., founder of the secular papacy and chief patron of the humanistic movement in Rome, had approved a scheme for thoroughly rebuilding and refortifying the pontifical city.[1] Part of this plan involved the reconstruction of S. Peter's. The old basilica was to be removed, and on its site was to rise a mighty church, shaped like a Latin cross, with a central dome and two high towers flanking the vestibule. Nicholas died before his project could be carried into effect. Beyond destroying the old temple of Probus and marking out foundations for the tribune of the new church, nothing had been accomplished;[2] nor did his successors until the reign of Julius think of continuing what he had begun. In 1506, on the 18th of April, Julius laid the first stone of S. Peter's according to the plans provided by Bramante. The basilica was designed in the shape of a Greek cross, surmounted by a colossal dome, and approached by a vestibule fronted with six columns. As in all the works of Bramante, simplicity and dignity distinguished this first scheme.[3] For eight years, until his death in 1514, Bramante laboured on the building. Julius,

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, pp. 296–298. Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, pp. 161–166. For his architectural designs see his Life, by Manetti, book ii., in Muratori, vol. iii. part ii.

[2] Gregorovius, vol. vii. p. 638.

[3] Besides the great work of Bonanni, *Templi Vaticani Historia*, I may refer my readers to the atlas volume of *Illustrations, Architectural and Pictorial, of the Genius of Michael Angelo Buonarroti*, compiled by Mr. Harford (Colnaghi, 1857). Plates 1 to 7 of that work are devoted to the plans of S. Peter's. Plate 4 is specially interesting, since it represents in one view the old basilica and the design of Bramante, together with those of Antonio di S. Gallo and Michael Angelo.

the most impatient of masters, urged him to work rapidly. In consequence of this haste, the substructures of the new church proved insecure, and the huge piers raised to support the cupola were imperfect, while the venerable monuments contained in the old church were ruthlessly destroyed.[1] After Bramante's death Giuliano di S. Gallo, Fra Giocondo, and Raphael successively superintended the construction, each for a short period. Raphael, under Leo X., was appointed sole architect, and went so far as to alter the design of Bramante by substituting the Latin for the Greek cross. Upon his death, Baldassare Peruzzi continued the work, and supplied a series of new designs, restoring the ground-plan of the church to its original shape. He was succeeded in the reign of Paul III. by Antonio di S. Gallo, who once more reverted to the Latin cross, and proposed a novel form of cupola with flanking towers for the façade, of bizarre rather than beautiful proportions. After a short interregnum, during which Giulio Romano superintended the building and did nothing remarkable, Michael Angelo was called in 1535 to undertake the sole charge of the edifice. He declared that wherever subsequent architects had departed from Bramante's project, they had erred. 'It is impossible to deny that Bramante was as great in architecture as any man has been since the days of the ancients. When he first laid the plan of S. Peter's, he made it not a mass of confusion, but clear and simple, well lighted, and so thoroughly detached that it in no way interfered with any portion of the palace.'[2] Having thus pronounced himself in general for Bramante's scheme, Michael Angelo proceeded to

[1] The subterranean vaults of S. Peter's contain mere fragments of tombs, some precious as historical records, some valuable as works of art, swept together pell-mell from the ruins of the old basilica.

[2] See the original letter to Ammanati, published from the Archivio Buonarroti, by Signor Milanesi, p. 535.

develop it in accordance with his own canons of taste. He retained the Greek cross; but the dome, as he conceived it, and the details designed for each section of the building, differed essentially from what the earlier master would have sanctioned. Not the placid and pure taste of Bramante, but the masterful and fiery genius of Buonarroti, is responsible for the colossal scale of the subordinate parts and variously broken lineaments of the existing church. In spite of all changes of direction, the fabric of S. Peter's had been steadily advancing. Michael Angelo was, therefore, able to raise the central structure as far as the drum of the cupola before his death. His plans and models were carefully preserved, and a special papal ordinance decreed that henceforth there should be no deviation from the scheme he had laid down. Unhappily this rule was not observed. Under Pius V., Vignola and Piero Ligorio did indeed continue his tradition; under Gregory XIII., Sixtus V., and Clement VIII., Giacomo della Porta made no substantial alterations; and in 1590 Domenico Fontana finished the dome. But during the pontificate of Paul V., Carlo Maderno resumed the form of the Latin cross, and completed the nave and vestibule, as they now stand, upon this altered plan (1614). The consequence is what has been already noted—at a moderate distance from the church the dome is lost to view; it only takes its true position of predominance when seen from far. In the year 1626, S. Peter's was consecrated by Urban VIII., and the mighty work was finished. It remained for Bernini to add the colonnades of the piazza, no less picturesque in their effect than admirably fitted for the pageantry of world-important ceremonial. At the end of the eighteenth century it was reckoned that the church had cost but little less than fifty million scudi.

Michael Angelo forms the link between the second and third periods of the Renaissance. Among the architects of

the latter age we have to reckon those who based their practice upon minute study of antique writers, and who, more than any of their predecessors, realised the long-sought restitution of the classic style according to precise scholastic canons.[1] A new age had now begun for Italy. The glory and the grace of the Renaissance, its blooming time of beauty, and its springtide of young strength, were over. Strangers held the reins of power, and the Reformation had begun to make itself felt in the Northern provinces of Christendom. A colder and more formal spirit everywhere prevailed. The sources of invention in the art of painting were dried up. Scholarship had pined away into pedantic purism. Correct taste was coming to be prized more highly than originality of genius in literature. Nor did architecture fail to manifest the operation of this change. The greatest builder of the period was Andrea Palladio of Vicenza, who combined a more complete analytical knowledge of antiquity with a firmer adherence to rule and precedent than even the most imitative of his forerunners. It is useless to seek for decorative fancy, wealth of detail, or sallies of inventive genius in the Palladian style. All is cold and calculated in the many palaces and churches of this master which adorn both Venice and Vicenza; they make us feel that creative inspiration has been superseded by the labour of the calculating reason. One great public building of Palladio's, however—the Palazzo della Ragione at Vicenza—may be cited as, perhaps, the culminating point of pure Renaissance architecture. In its simple and heroical arcades, its solid columns, and noble open spaces, the strength of Rome is realised to the eyes of those who do not penetrate

[1] I am far from meaning that the earlier architects had not been guided by ancient authors. Alberti's *Treatise on the Art of Building* is a sufficient proof of their study of Vitruvius, and we know that Fabio Calvi translated that writer into Italian for Raphael. In the later Renaissance this study passed into purism.

too far inside the building.[1] Here, and here only, the architectural problem of the epoch—how to bring the art of the ancients back to life and use again—was solved according to the spirit and the letter of the past. Palladio never equalled this, the earliest of all his many works.

In the first half of the sixteenth century the dictatorship of art had been already transferred from Florence and Rome to Lombardy.[2] The painters who carried on the great traditions were Venetian. Among the architects, Palladio was a native of Vicenza; Giacomo Barozzi, the author of the 'Treatise on the Orders,' took the name by which he is known from his birthplace, Vignola; Vincenzo Scamozzi was a fellow-townsman of Palladio; Galeazzo Alessi, though born at Perugia, spent his life and developed his talents in Genoa; Andrea Formigine, the palace-builder, was a Bolognese; Bartolommeo Ammanati alone at Florence exercised the arts of sculpture and architecture in their old conjunction. Vignola, Palladio's elder by a few years, displays in his work even more of the scholastically frigid spirit of the late Renaissance, the narrowing of poetic impulse, and the dwindling of vitality, that sadden the second half of the sixteenth century in Italy. Scamozzi, labouring at Venice on works that Sansovino left unfinished, caught the genial spirit of the old Venetian style. Alessi, in like manner, at Genoa, felt the influences of a rich and splendour-loving aristocracy. His church of S. Maria di Carignano is one of the most successful ecclesiastical buildings of the late Renaissance, combining the principles of Bramante and Michael Angelo in close imitation of S. Peter's, and adhering in detail to the canons of the new taste.

[1] It must be confessed that this grandiose and picturesque structure is but a shell to mask an earlier Gothic edifice.

[2] Compare Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, p. 370, for the same transference of power in literature from Central to Northern Italy at this time.

These canons were based upon a close study of Vitruvius. Palladio, Vignola, and Scamozzi were no less ambitious as authors than as architects;[1] their minute analysis of antique treatises on the art of construction led to the formation of exact rules for the treatment of the five classic orders, the proportions of the chief parts used in building, and the correct method of designing theatres and palaces, church-fronts and cupolas. Thus architecture in its third Renaissance period passed into scholasticism.

The masters of this age, chiefly through the weight of their authority as writers, exercised a wider European influence than any of their predecessors. We English, for example, have given Palladio's name to the Italian style adopted by us in the seventeenth century. This selection of one man to represent an epoch was due partly no doubt to the prestige of Palladio's great buildings in the South, but more, I think, to the facility with which his principles could be assimilated. Depending but little for effect upon the arts of decoration, his style was easily imitated in countries where painting and sculpture were unknown, and where a genius like Jean Goujon, the Sansovino of the French, has never been developed. To have rivalled the façade of the Certosa would have been impossible in London. Yet here Wren produced a cathedral worthy of comparison with the proudest of the late Italian edifices. Moreover, the principles of taste that governed Europe in the seventeenth century were such as found fitter architectural expression in this style than in the more genial and capricious manner of the earlier periods.

After reviewing the rise and development of Renaissance

[1] Palladio's *Four Books of Architecture*, first published at Venice in 1570, and Vignola's *Treatise on the Five Orders*, have been translated into all the modern languages. Scamozzi projected, and partly finished, a comprehensive work on *Universal Architecture*, which was printed in 1685 at Venice.

architecture, it is almost irresistible to compare the process whereby the builders of this age learned to use dead forms for the expression of their thoughts, with the similar process by which the scholars accustomed themselves to Latin metres and the cadences of Ciceronian periods.[1] The object in each case was the same—to be as true to the antique as possible, and without actually sacrificing the independence of the modern mind, to impose upon it the limitations of a bygone civilisation. At first the enthusiasm for antiquity inspired architects and scholars alike with a desire to imitate *per saltum*, and many works of fervid sympathy and pure artistic intuition were produced. In course of time the laws both of language and construction were more accurately studied; invention was superseded by pedantry; after Poliziano and Alberti came Bembo and Palladio. In proportion as architects learned more about Vitruvius, and scholars narrowed their taste to Virgil, the style of both became more cramped and formal. It ceased at last to be possible to express modern ideas freely in the correct Latinity required by cultivated ears, while no room for originality, no scope for poetry of invention, remained in the elaborated method of the architects. Neo-Latin literature dwindled away to nothing, and Palladio was followed by the violent reactionaries of the *barocco* mannerism.

In one all-important respect this parallel breaks down. While the labours of the Latinists subserved the simple process of instruction, by purifying literary taste and familiarising the modern mind with the masterpieces of the classic authors, the architects created a new common style for Europe. With all its defects, it is not likely that the neo-Roman architecture, so profoundly studied by the Italians, and so anxiously refined by their chief masters, will ever wholly cease to be employed. In all cases where a grand and massive edifice,

[1] See Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, chap. viii.

no less suited to purposes of practical utility than imposing by its splendour, is required, this style of building will be found the best. Changes of taste and fashion, local circumstances, and the personal proclivities of modern architects may determine the choice of one type rather than another among the numerous examples furnished by Italian masters. But it is not possible that either Greek or Gothic should permanently take the place assigned to neo-Roman architecture in the public buildings of European capitals.

CHAPTER III

SCULPTURE

Niccola Pisano—Obscurity of the sources for a History of Early Italian Sculpture—Vasari's Legend of Pisano—Deposition from the Cross at Lucca—Study of Nature and the Antique—Sarcophagus at Pisa—Pisan Pulpit—Niccola's School—Giovanni Pisano—Pulpit in S. Andrea at Pistoja—Fragments of his work at Pisa—Tomb of Benedict XI. at Perugia—Bas-reliefs at Orvieto—Andrea Pisano—Relation of Sculpture to Painting—Giotto—Subordination of Sculpture to Architecture in Italy—Pisano's influence in Venice—Balduccio of Pisa—Orcagna—The Tabernacle of Orsammichele—The Gates of the Florentine Baptistery—Competition of Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, and Della Quercia—Comparison of Ghiberti's and Brunelleschi's Trial-pieces—Comparison of Ghiberti and Della Quercia—The Bas-reliefs of S. Petronio—Ghiberti's Education—His Pictorial Style in Bas-relief—His feeling for the Antique—Donatello—Early Visit to Rome—Christian subjects—Realistic Treatment—S. George and David—Judith—Equestrian Statue of Gattamelata—Influence of Donatello's Naturalism—Andrea Verocchio—His David—Statue of Colleoni—Alessandro Leopardi—Lionardo's Statue of Francesco Sforza—The Pollajuoli—Tombs of Sixtus IV. and Innocent VIII.—Luca della Robbia—His Treatment of Glazed Earthenware—Agostino di Duccio—The Oratory of S. Bernardino at Perugia—Antonio Rossellino—Matteo Civitali—Mino da Fiesole—Benedetto da Majano—Characteristics and Masterpieces of this Group—Sepulchral Monuments—Andrea Contucci's Tombs in S. Maria del Popolo—Desiderio da Settignano—Sculpture in S. Francesco at Rimini—Venetian Sculpture—Verona—Guido Mazzoni of Modena—Certosa of Pavia—Colleoni Chapel at Bergamo—Sansovino at Venice—Pagan Sculpture—Michael Angelo's Scholars—Baccio Bandinelli—Bartolommeo Ammanati—Cellini—Gian Bologna—Survey of the History of Renaissance Sculpture.

In the procession of the fine arts, sculpture always follows close upon the steps of architecture, and at first appears in

some sense as her handmaid. Mediæval Italy found her Pheidias in a great man of Pisan origin, born during the first decade of the thirteenth century. It was Niccola Pisano, architect and sculptor, who first breathed with the breath of genius life into the dead forms of plastic art. From him we date the dawn of the æsthetical Renaissance with the same certainty as from Petrarch that of humanism; for he determined the direction not only of sculpture but also of painting in Italy. To quote the language of Lord Lindsay's panegyric: 'Neither Dante nor Shakspere can boast such extent and durability of influence; for whatever of highest excellence has been achieved in sculpture and painting, not in Italy only but throughout Europe, has been in obedience to the impulse he primarily gave, and in following up the principle which he first struck out.'[1] In truth, Niccola Pisano put the artist on the right track of combining the study of antiquity with the study of nature; and to him belongs the credit not merely of his own achievement, considerable as that may be, but also of the work of his immediate scholars and of all who learned from him to portray life. From Niccola Pisano onward to Michael Angelo and Cellini we trace one genealogy of sculptors, who, though they carried art beyond the sphere of his invention, looked back to him as their progenitor. The man who first emancipated sculpture from servile bondage, and opened a way for the attainment of true beauty, would by the Greeks have been honoured with a special cultus as the Hero Eponym of art. It remains for us after our own fashion to pay some such homage to Pisano.

The chief difficulty with which the student of early art and literature has to deal, is the insufficiency of positive information. Instead of accurate dates and well-established facts he finds a legend, rich apparently in detail, but liable at every point to doubt, and subject to attack by plausible con-

[1] *Sketches of the History of Christian Art*, vol. ii. p. 102.

/ecture. In the absence of contemporary documents and other trustworthy sources of instruction, he is tempted to substitute his own hypotheses for tradition and to reconstruct the faulty outlines of forgotten history according to his own ideas of fitness. The Germans have been our masters in this species of destructive, dubitative, restorative criticism; and it is undoubtedly flattering to the historian's vanity to constitute himself a judge and arbiter in cases where tact and ingenuity may claim to sift the scattered fragment of confused narration. Yet to resist this temptation is in many cases a plain and simple duty. Tradition, when not positively disproved, should be allowed to have its full value; and a sounder historic sense is exercised in adopting its testimony with due caution, than in recklessly rejecting it and substituting guesses which the lack of knowledge renders unsubstantial. Tradition may err about dates, details, and names. It is just here that antiquarian research can render valuable help. But there are occasions when the perusal of documents and the exercise of what is called the higher criticism afford no surer basis for opinion. If in such cases a legend has been formed and recorded, the student will advance further toward comprehending the spirit of his subject by patiently considering what he knows to be in part perhaps a mythus, than by starting with the foregone conclusion that the legend must of necessity be worthless, and that his cunning will suffice to supply the missing clue.[1]

[1] Since I wrote the paragraph above, I have chanced to read Mr. Ruskin's eloquent tirade against the modern sceptical school of critics in his 'Mornings in Florence,' *The Vaulted Book*, pp. 105, 106. With the spirit of it I thoroughly agree; feeling that, in the absence of solid evidence to the contrary, I would always rather accept sixteenth-century Italian tradition with Vasari, than reject it with German or English speculators of to-day. This does not mean that I wish to swear by Vasari, when he can be proved to have been wrong, but that I regard the present tendency to mistrust tradition, only because it is tradition, as in the highest sense uncritical.

Thus much I have said by way of preface to what follows upon Niccola Pisano. Almost all we know about him is derived from a couple of inscriptions, a few contracts, and his Life by Giorgio Vasari. It is clear that Vasari often wrote with carelessness, confusing dates and places, and taking no pains to verify the truth of his assertions. Much of Niccola's biography reads like a legend in his pages—the popular and oral tradition of a great man, whose panegyric it was more easy in the sixteenth century to adorn with rhetoric than to chronicle the details of his life with scrupulous fidelity. A well-founded conviction of Vasari's frequent inaccuracy has induced recent critics to call in question many hitherto accepted points about the nationality and training of Pisano. The discussion of their arguments I leave for the appendix, contenting myself at present with relating so much of Vasari's legend as cannot, I think, reasonably be rejected.[1]

Before the sculptor appeared in Niccola Pisano, he was already a famous architect; and it must always be remembered that he and his school subordinated the plastic to the constructive arts. It was not until the year 1233, or 1237, according to different modern calculations, that he executed his first masterpiece in sculpture.[2] This was a 'Deposition from the Cross,' in high relief, placed in a lunette over one of the side doors of S. Martino at Lucca. The noble forms of this group, the largeness of its style, the breadth of drapery and freedom of action it displays, but, above all, the unity of its design, proclaimed that a new era had begun for art.

[1] See Appendix I., on the Pulpits of Pisa and Ravello.

[2] The date is extremely doubtful. Were we to trust internal evidence —the evidence of style and handling—we should be inclined to name this not the earliest but the latest and ripest of Pisano's works. It may be suggested in passing that the form of the lunette was favourable to the composition by forcing a gradation in the figures from the centre to either side. There is an engraving of this bas-relief in Ottley's *Italian School of Design*.

In order to appreciate the importance of this relief, it is only necessary to compare it with the processional treatment of similar subjects upon early Christian sarcophagi, where each figure stands up stiff and separate, nor can the controlling and combining artist's thought be traced in any effort after composition. Ever since the silver age of Hadrian, when a Bithynian slave by his beauty gave a final impulse to the Genius of Greece, sculpture had been gradually declining until nothing was left but a formal repetition of conventional outlines. The so-called Romanesque and Byzantine styles were but the dotage of second childhood, fumbling with the methods and materials of an irrecoverable past. It is true, indeed, that unknown mediæval carvers had shown an instinct for the beautiful as well as great fertility of grotesque invention. The façades of Lombard churches are covered with fanciful and sometimes forcibly dramatic groups of animals and men in combat; and contemporaneously with Niccola Pisano, many Gothic sculptors of the North were adorning the façades and porches of cathedrals with statuary unrivalled in one style of loveliness.[1] Yet the founder of a line of progressive artists had not arisen, and, except in Italy, the conditions were still wanting under which alone the plastic arts could attain to independence. A fresh start, at once conscious and scientific, was imperatively demanded. This new beginning sculpture took in the brain of Niccola Pisano, who returned from the bye-paths of his predecessors to the free field of nature, and who learned precious lessons from the fragments of classical sculpture existing in his native town. As though to prove the essential dependence of the modern revival upon the recovery of antique culture, we find that his genius, in spite of its powerful originality and profoundly Christian bias, required the confirmation

[1] Rheims Cathedral, for example, was begun in 1211. Upon its western portals is the loveliest of Northern Gothic sculpture.

which could only be derived from Græco-Roman precedent. In the Campo Santo at Pisa may still be seen a sarcophagus representing the story of Hippolytus and Phædra, where once reposed the dust of Beatrice, the mother of the pious Countess Matilda of Tuscany. Studying the heroic nudities and noble attitudes of this bas-relief, Niccola rediscovered the right way of art—not by merely copying his model, but by divining the secret of the grand style. His work at Pisa contains abundant evidence that, while he could not wholly free himself from the defects of the later Romanesque manner, betrayed by his choice of short and square-set types, he nevertheless learned from the antique how to aim at beauty and freedom in his imitation of the living human form. A marble vase, sculptured with Indian Bacchus and his train of Mænads, gave him further help. From these grave or graceful classic forms, satisfied with their own goodliness, and void of inner symbolism, the Christian sculptor drank the inspiration of Renaissance art. In the 'Adoration of the Magi,' carved upon his Pisan pulpit, Madonna assumes the haughty pose of Theseus' wife; while the high priest, in the 'Circumcision,' displays the majesty of Dionysus leaning on the neck of Ampelus. Nor again is the naked vigour of Hippolytus without its echo in the figure of the young man—Hercules or Fortitude—upon a bracket of the same pulpit. These sculptures of Pisano are thus for us a symbol of what happened in the age of the Revival. The old world and the new shook hands; Christianity and Hellenism kissed each other. And yet they still remained antagonistic—fused externally by art, but severed in the consciousness that, during those strange years of dubious impulse, felt the might of both. Monks leaning from Pisano's pulpit preached the sinfulness of natural pleasure to women whose eyes were fixed on the adolescent beauty of an athlete. Not far off was the time when Filarete should cast in bronze the legends of Ganymede and Leda for

the portals of S. Peter's, when Raphael should mingle a carnival of more than pagan sensuality with Bible subjects in Leo's Loggie, when Guglielmo della Porta should place the naked portrait of Giulia Bella in marble at the feet of Paul III. upon his sepulchre.[1]

Niccola, meanwhile, did not follow his Roman models in any slavish spirit. They were neither numerous nor excellent enough to compel blind imitation or to paralyse inventive impulse. The thoughts to be expressed in marble by the first modern artist were not Greek. This in itself saved him from that tendency to idle reproduction which proved the ruin of the later neo-pagan sculptors. Yet the fragments of antique work he found within his reach, helped him to struggle after a higher quality of style, and established standards of successful treatment. For the rest, his choice of form and the proportions of his figures show that Niccola resorted to native Tuscan models. If nothing of his handiwork were left but the bas-relief of the 'Inferno' on the Pisan pulpit, the torsos of the men struggling with demons in that composition would prove this point. It remains his crowning merit to have first expressed the mythology of Christianity

[1] Antonio Filarete was commissioned, soon after 1431, by Eugenius IV., to make the great gates of S. Peter's. The decorative framework represents a multitude of living creatures—snails, snakes, lizards, mice, butterflies, and birds—half hidden in foliage, together with the best known among Greek myths, the Rape of Proserpine, Diana and Actæon, Europa and the Bull, the Labours of Hercules, &c. Such fables as the Fox and the Stork, the Fox and the Crow, and old stories like that of the death of Æschylus, are included in this medley. The monument of Paul III. is placed in the choir of S. Peter's. Giulia Bella was the mistress of Alexander VI., and a sister of the Farnese, who owed his cardinal's hat to her influence. To represent her as an allegory of Truth upon her brother's tomb might well pass for a grim satire. The Prudence opposite is said to be a portrait of the Pope's mother, Giovanna Gaëtani. She resembles nothing more than a duenna of the type of Martha in Goethe's *Faust*. Here, again, the allegory would point a scathing sarcasm, if we did not remember the naïveté of the Renaissance.

and the sentiment of the Middle Ages with the conscious aim of a real artist. And here it may be noticed that, a true Italian, he infused but little of intense or mystical emotion into his art. Niccola is more of a humanist, if this word may be applied to a sculptor, than some of his immediate successors. The hexagonal pulpit in the Baptistery of Pisa, the octagonal pulpit in the cathedral of Siena, the fountain in the market-place of Perugia, and the shrine of S. Dominic at Bologna, all of them designed and partly finished between 1260 and 1274 by Niccola and his scholars, display his mastery over the art of sculpture in the maturity of his genius. So highly did the Pisans prize their fellow-townsman's pulpit that a law was passed and guardians were appointed for its preservation—much in the same way as the Zeus of Pheidias was consigned to the care of the Phaidruntai.

Niccola Pisano founded a school. His son Giovanni, and the numerous pupils employed upon the monuments just mentioned at Siena, Bologna, and Perugia, carried on the tradition of their master, and spread his style abroad through Italy. Giovanni Pisano, to whom we owe the Spina Chapel and the Campo Santo at Pisa, the façade of the Sienese Duomo, and the altar-shrine of S. Donato at Arezzo—four of the purest works of Gothic art in Italy—showed a very decided leaning to the vehement and mystic style of the Transalpine sculptors. We trace a dramatic intensity in Giovanni's work, not derived from his father, not caught from study of the antique, and curiously blended with the general characteristics of the Pisan school. In spite of the Gothic cusps introduced by Niccola into his pulpits, the spirit of his work remained classical. The young Hercules holding the lion's cub in his right hand upon his shoulder, while with his left he tames the raging lioness, has the true Italian instinct for a return to Latin style. The same sympathy with the past is observable in the self-restraint and com-

parative coldness of the bas-reliefs at Pisa. The Junonian attitude of Madonna, the senatorial dignity of Simeon, the ponderous folding of the drapery, and the massive carriage of the neck throughout, denote an effort to revivify an antique manner. What, therefore, Niccola effected for sculpture was a classical revival in the very depth of the Middle Ages. The case is different with his son Giovanni. Profiting by the labours of his father, and following in his footsteps, he carried the new art into another region, and brought a genius of more picturesque and forcible temper into play. The value of this new direction given to sculpture for the arts of Italy, especially for painting, cannot be exaggerated. Without Giovanni's intervention, the achievement of Niccola might possibly have been as unproductive of immediate results as the Tuscan Romanesque, that mediæval effort after the Renaissance, was in architecture.[1]

The Gothic element, so cautiously adopted by Niccola, is used with sympathy and freedom by his son, whose masterpiece, the pulpit of S. Andrea at Pistoja, might be selected as the supreme triumph of Italian Gothic sculpture. The superiority of that complex and consummate work of plastic art over the pulpit of the Pisan Baptistery, in all the most important qualities of style and composition, can scarcely be called in question. Its only serious fault is an exaggeration of the height of the pillars in proportion to the size of the hexagon they support. Like the pulpits of the Baptistery, of the Duomo of Pisa, and of the Duomo of Siena, it combines bas-reliefs and detached statues, carved capitals, and sculptured lions, in a maze of marvellous invention; but it has no rival in the architectonic effect of harmony, and the masterly feeling for balanced masses it displays. The five subjects chosen by Giovanni for his bas-reliefs are the 'Nativity,' the 'Adoration of the Magi,' the 'Massacre of the Innocents,' the 'Crucifixion,'

[1] See above, p. 36.

and the 'Last Judgment.' In the 'Nativity' our Lady is no longer the Roman matron of Niccola's conception, but a graceful mother, young in years, and bending with the weakness of childbirth. Her attitude, exquisite by the suggestion of tenderness and delicacy, is one that often reappears in the later work of the Pisan school—for example, in the rough *abozzamento* in the Campo Santo at Pisa, above the north door of the Duomo at Lucca, and at Orvieto on the façade of the cathedral; but it has nowhere else been treated with the same sense of beauty. The 'Massacre of the Innocents,' compared with this relief, is a tragedy beside an idyll. Here the whole force of Giovanni's eminently dramatic genius comes into full play. Not only has he treated the usual incidents of mothers struggling with soldiers and bewailing their dead darlings, but he has also introduced a motive, which might well have been used by subsequent artists in dealing with the same subjects. Herod is throned in one corner of the composition; before him stand a group of men and women, some imploring the tyrant for mercy, some defying him in impotent despair, and some invoking the curse of God upon his head. In the 'Adoration of the Magi,' again, Giovanni shows originality by the double action he has chosen to develop. On one side the kings are sleeping, while an angel comes to wake them, pointing out the star. On the other side they fall at the feet of the Madonna. It will be gathered even from these bare descriptions that Giovanni introduced a stir of life and movement, and felt his subjects with a poetic intensity, alien to the ideal of Græco-Roman sculpture. He effected a fusion between the grand style revived by Niccola and the romantic fervour of the modern imagination. It was in this way that the tradition handed down by him proved inestimably serviceable to the painters.

The bas-reliefs, however, by no means form the chief

attraction of this pulpit. At each of its six angles stand saints, evangelists, and angels, whose symbolism it is not now so easy to decipher. The most beautiful groups are a company of angels blowing the judgment trumpets, and a winged youth standing above a winged lion and bull. These groups separate the several compartments of the bas-reliefs, and help to form the body of the pulpit. Beneath, on capitals of the supporting pillars, stand the Sibyls, each with her attendant genius, while prophets lean or crouch within the spandrils of the arches. Thus every portion of this masterwork is crowded with figures—some detached, some executed in relief; and yet, amid so great a multitude, the eye is not confused; the total effect is nowhere dissipated. The whole seems governed by one constructive thought, projected as a perfect unity of composition.[1]

A later work of Giovanni Pisano was the pulpit executed for the cathedral of Pisa, now unfortunately broken up. An interesting fragment, one of the supporting columns of the octagon which formed the body of this structure, still exists in the museum of the Campo Santo. It is an allegorical statue of Pisa. The Ghibelline city is personified as a crowned woman, suckling children at her breast, and standing on a pedestal supported by the eagle of the Empire. She wears a girdle of rope seven times knotted, to betoken the rule of Pisa over seven subject islands. At the four corners of her throne stand the four human virtues, Prudence, Temperance, Justice, and Fortitude, distinguished less by beauty of shape than by determined energy of symbolism. Temperance is a naked woman, with hair twisted in the knots and curls of a Greek Aphrodite. Justice is old and wrinkled, clothed with massive

[1] Having said so much about this pulpit of S. Andrea, I am sorry that I cannot refer the English reader to any accessible representation of it. For its sake alone, if for no other purpose, Pistoja is well worth a visit.

drapery, and holding in her hand the scales. Throughout this group there is no attempt to realise forms pleasing to the eye; the sculptor has aimed at suggesting to the mind as many points of intellectual significance as possible. In spite of ugliness and hardness, the 'Allegory of Pisa' commands respect by vigour of conception, and rivets attention by force of execution.

A more popular and pleasing monument by Giovanni Pisano is the tomb of Benedict XI. in the church of S. Domenico at Perugia. The Pope, whose life was so obnoxious to the ambition of Philip le Bel that his timely death aroused suspicion of poison, lies asleep upon his marble bier with hands crossed in an attitude of peaceful expectation.[1] At his head and feet stand angels drawing back the curtains that would else have shrouded this last slumber of a good man from the eyes of the living.[2] A contrast is thus established between the repose of the dead and the ever-watchful activity of celestial ministers. Sleep so guarded, the sculptor seeks to tell us, must have glorious waking; and when those hands unfold upon the Resurrection morning, the hushed sympathy of the attendant angels will break into smiles and singing, as they lead the just man to the Lord he served in life.

Whether Giovanni Pisano had any share in the sculpture on the façade of the cathedral at Orvieto, is not known for certain. Vasari asserts that Niccola and his pupils worked upon this series of bas-reliefs, setting forth the whole Biblical history and the cycle of Christian beliefs from the creation of the world to the last judgment. Yet we know that Niccola himself died at least twelve years before the foundation of the church in 1290; nor is there any proof that his immediate scholars were engaged upon the fabric. The Orvietan archives

[1] It was long believed that he died of eating poisoned figs.

[2] See above, p. 45, note, for the original conception of this motive at Orvieto.

are singularly silent with regard to a monument of so large extent and vast importance, which must have taxed to the uttermost the resources of the ablest stone-carvers in Italy.[1] Meanwhile, what Vasari says is valuable only as a witness to the fame of Niccola Pisano. His manner, as continued and developed by his school, is unmistakable at Orvieto: but in the absence of direct information, we are left to conjecture the conditions under which this, the closing if not the crowning achievement of thirteenth-century sculpture, was produced.

When the great founder of Italian art visited Siena in 1266 for the completion of his pulpit in the Duomo, he found a guild of sculptors, or *taglia-pietri*, in that city, numbering some sixty members, and governed by a rector and three chamberlains. Instead of regarding Niccola with jealousy. these craftsmen only sought to learn his method. Accordingly it seems that a new impulse was given to sculpture in Siena; and famous workmen arose who combined this art with that of building. The chief of these was Lorenzc Maitani, who died in 1330, having designed and carried to completion the Duomo of Orvieto during his lifetime.[2] While engaged in this great undertaking, Maitani directed a body of architects, stone-carvers, bronze-founders, mosaists, and painters, gathered together into a guild from the chief cities of Tuscany. It cannot be proved that any of the Pisani, properly so called, were among their number. Lacking evidence to the contrary, we must give to Maitani, the master-spirit of the company, full credit for the sculpture carried out in obedience to his general plan. As the church of S. Francis at Assisi formed an epoch in the history of painting, by concentrating the genius of Giotto on a series of

[1] See *Il Duomo di Orvieto, descritto ed illustrato per Lodovico Luzi*, pp. 330–339.

[2] See Luzi, pp. 317–328, and the first extant commission given in 1310 to Maitani, which follows, pp. 328–330.

masterpieces, so the Duomo of Orvieto, by giving free scope to the school of Pisa, marked a point in the history of sculpture. It would be difficult to find elsewhere even separate works of greater force and beauty belonging to this, the first or architectural, period of Italian sculpture; and nowhere has the whole body of Christian belief been set forth with method more earnest and with vigour more sustained.[1] The subjects selected by these unknown craftsmen for illustration in marble, are in many instances the same as those afterwards painted in fresco by Michael Angelo and Raphael at Rome. Their treatment, for example, of the creation of Adam and Eve, adopted in all probability from still earlier and ruder workmen, after being refined by the improvements of successive generations, may still be observed in the triumphs of the Sistine Chapel and the Loggie.[2] It was the practice of Italian artists not to seek originality by diverging from the traditional modes of presentation, but to prove their mastery by rendering these as

[1] The whole series has been admirably engraved under the superintendence of Ludwig Grüner. Special attention may be directed to the groups of angels attendant on the Creator in His last day's work; to the 'Adoration of the Shepherds,' distinguished by tender and idyllic grace: and to the 'Adoration of the Magi,' marked no less by majesty. The dead breaking open the lids of their sarcophagi and rising to judgment are justly famous for spirited action.

[2] In Gothic sculpture of an early date the Bible narrative is literally represented. God draws Eve from the open side of sleeping Adam. On the façade of Orvieto this motive is less altered than refined. The wound in Adam's side is visible, but Eve is coming from behind his sleeping body in obedience to the beckoning hand of her Creator. Ghiberti in the bronze gate of the Florentine Baptistery still further develops the poetic beauty of the motive. Angels lift Eve in the air above Adam, in whose side there is now no open wound, and sustain her face to face with God, who calls her into life. Della Quercia, on the façade of S. Petronio, confines himself to the creative act, expressed by the raised hand of the Maker, and the answering attitude of Eve; and this conception receives final treatment from Michael Angelo in the frescoes of the Sistine.

perfect and effective as the maturity of art could make them. For the Italians, as before them for the Greeks, plagiarism was a word unknown, in all cases where it was possible to improve upon the invention of less fortunate predecessors. The student of art may, therefore, now enjoy the pleasure of tracing sculpturesque or pictorial motives from their genesis in some rude fragment to their final development in the master-works of a Lionardo or a Raphael, where scientific grouping of figures, higher idealisation of style, the suggestion of freer movement, and more varied dramatic expression yield at last the full flower that the simple germ enfolded.

Among the most distinguished scholars of Niccola Pisano's tradition must now be mentioned Andrea da Pontadera, called Andrea Pisano, who carried the manner of his master to Florence, and helped to fulfil the destiny of Italian sculpture by submitting it to the rising art of painting. Under the direction of Giotto he carved statues for the Campanile and the façade of S. Maria del Fiore; and in the first gate of the Baptistery, he bequeathed a model of bas-relief in bronze, which largely influenced the style of masters in the fifteenth century. To overpraise the simplicity and beauty of design, the purity of feeling, and the technical excellence of Andrea's bronze-work, would be difficult. Many students will always be found to prefer his self-restraint and delicacy to the more florid manner of Ghiberti.[1] What we chiefly observe in this gate is the control exercised by the sister art of painting over his mode of conception and treatment. If Giovanni Pisano developed the dramatic and emphatic qualities of Gothic sculpture, Andrea was attracted to its allegories; if Giovanni infused romantic vehemence of feeling into the frigid classicism of his father, Andrea

[1] *Le Tre Porte del Battistero di San Giovanni di Firenze, incise ed illustrate* (Firenze, 1821), contains outlines of all Andrea Pisano's and Ghiberti's work.

diverged upon another track of picturesque delineation. A new sun had now arisen in the heavens of art. This was the sun of Giotto, whose genius, eminently pictorial, brought the Italians to a true sense of their æsthetical vocation, illuminating with its brightness the elder and more technically finished craft of the stone-carver. Sculpture, which in the school of Niccola Pisano had been subordinate to architecture, became a sub-species of painting in the hands of Andrea.

It was thus, as I have elsewhere stated, that the twofold doom of plastic art in Italy was accomplished. In order to embody the ideas of Christianity, art had to think more of expression than of pure form. Expression is the special sphere of painting; and therefore sculpture followed the lead of the sister art, as soon as painting was strong enough to give that lead, instead of remaining, as in Greece, the mistress of her own domain. On the deeper reasons for this subordination of sculpture to painting I have dwelt already, while showing that a large class of subjects, where physical qualities are comparatively indifferent and of no account, were forced upon the artist by Christianity.[1] Humility and charity may be found alike in blooming youth or in ascetic age; nor is it possible to characterize saints and martyrs by those corporeal characteristics which distinguish a runner from a boxer, or a chaste huntress from a voluptuous queen of love. Italian sculpture abandoned the presentation of the naked human body as useless. The emotions written on the face became of more importance than the modelling of the limbs, and recourse was had to allegorical symbols or emblematic attitudes for the interpretation of the artist's thought. Andrea Pisano's figure of Hope, raising hands and eyes toward an offered crown, seems but a repetition of the motive expressed by Giotto in the chiaroscuro frescoes of the Arena chapel.[1]

[1] See above, pp. 9–13.

Owing to similar causes, drapery, which in Greece had served to illustrate the structure or the movement of the body it clothed, was used by the Italian sculptors to conceal the limbs, and to enhance by flowing skirt or sinuous fold or agitated scarf some quality of the emotions. The result was that sculpture assumed a place subordinate to painting, and that the masterpieces of the early Italian carvers are chiefly bas-reliefs—pictures in bronze or marble.

In a like degree, though not for the same reason, sculpture in Italy remained subordinate to architecture, until such time as the neo-Hellenism of the full Renaissance produced a crowd of pseudo-classic statues, destined to take their places —not in churches, but in the courtyards of palaces and on the open squares of cities. The cause of this fact is not far to seek. In ancient Greece the temple had been erected for the god, and the statue dwelt within the cella like a master in his house. Christianity forbade an image of the living God; consequently the Church had another object than to roof the statue of a deity. It was the meeting-place of a congregation bent on worshipping Him who dwells not in houses made with hands, and whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain. The vast spaces and aërial arcades of mediæval architecture had their meaning in relation to the mystic apprehension of an unseen power. It followed of necessity that the carved work destined to decorate a Christian temple could never be the main feature of the building. It existed for the Church, and not the Church for it.[2]

Through Andrea Pisano the style of Niccola was extended

[1] What Giotto himself was, as a designer for sculpture, is shown in the little reliefs upon the basement of his campanile.

[2] What has previously been noted in the chapter upon architecture deserves repetition here—that the Italian style of building gave more scope to independent sculpture, owing to its preference for flat walls, and its rejection of multiplied niches, canopies, and so forth, than the

to Venice. There is reason to believe that he instructed Filippo Calendario, to whom we should ascribe the sculptured corners of the Ducal Palace. Venice, however, invariably exercised her own controlling influence over the arts of aliens; so we find a larger, freer, richer, and more mundane treatment in these splendid carvings than in aught produced by Pisan workmen for their native towns of Tuscany.

Nino, the sculptor of the 'Madonna della Rosa,' the chief ornament of the Spina chapel, and Tommaso, both sons of Andrea da Pontadera, together with Giovanni Balduccio of Pisa, continued the traditions of the school founded by Niccola. Balduccio, invited by Azzo Visconti to Milan, carved the shrine of S. Peter Martyr in the church of S. Eustorgio, and impressed his style on Matteo da Campione, the sculptor of the shrine of S. Augustine at Pavia.[1] These facts, though briefly stated, are not without significance. Travellers who have visited the churches of Pavia and Milan, after studying the shrine, or *arca* as Italians call it, of S. Dominic at Bologna, must have noticed the ascendency of Pisan style in these three Lombard towns, and have felt how widely Niccola's creative genius was exercised. Traces of the same influence may perhaps be observed in the tombs of the Scaligers at Verona.[2]

The most eminent pupil of Andrea Pisano, however, was a Florentine—the great Andrea Arcagnuolo di Cione, commonly known as Orcagna. This man, like the more

Northern Gothic. Thus, however subordinated to architecture, sculpture in Italy still had more scope for self-assertion than in Germany or France.

[1] See Perkins, *Italian Sculptors*, p. 109, for a description of the Arca di S. Agostino, which he assigns to Matteo and Bonino da Campione. This shrine, now in the Duomo, was made for the sacristy of S. Pietro in Cielo d'Oro, where it stood until the year 1832.

[2] Bonino da Campione, the Milanese, who may have had a hand in the Arca di S. Agostino, carved the tomb of Can Signorio. That of Mastino II. was executed by another Milanese, Perino.

illustrious Giotto, was one among the earliest of those comprehensive, many-sided natures produced by Florence for her everlasting glory. He studied the goldsmith's craft under his father, Cione, passing the years of his apprenticeship, like other Tuscan artists, in the technical details of an industry that then supplied the strictest method of design. With his brother, Bernardo, he practised painting. Like Giotto, he was no mean poet;[1] and like all the higher craftsmen of his age, he was an architect. Though the church of Orsammichele owes its present form to Taddeo Gaddi, Orcagna, as *capo maëstro* after Gaddi's death, completed the structure; and though the Loggia de' Lanzi, long ascribed to him by writers upon architecture, is now known to be the work of Benci di Cione, yet Orcagna's Loggia del Bigallo, more modest but not less beautiful, prepared the way for its construction. Of his genius as a painter, proved by the frescoes in the Strozzi chapel, I shall have to speak hereafter. As a sculptor he is best known through the tabernacle of Orsammichele, built to enshrine the picture of the Madonna by Ugolino da Siena.[2]

In this monument Orcagna employed carved bas-reliefs and statuettes, intaglios and mosaics, incrustations of agates, enamels, and gilded glass patterns, with a sense of harmony so refined, and a mastery over each kind of workmanship so perfect, that the whole tabernacle is an epitome of the minor arts of mediæval Italy. The subordination of sculpture to architectural effect is noticeable; and the Giottesque influence appears even more strongly here than in the gate of Andrea Pisano. This influence Orcagna received indirectly through his master in stone carving; it formed, indeed, the motive force of figurative art during his lifetime. The

[1] See Trucchi, *Poesie Italiane inedite*, vol. ii.

[2] See the Illustrated work, *Il Tabernacolo della Madonna d'Orcammichele*, Firenze, 1851.

subjects of the 'Annunciation,' the 'Nativity,' the 'Marriage of the Virgin,' and the 'Adoration of the Three Kings,' framed in octagonal mouldings at the base of the tabernacle, illustrate the domination of a spirit distinct both from the neo-Romanism of Niccola and the Gothicism of Giovanni Pisano. That spirit is Florentine in a general sense, and specifically Giottesque. Charity, again, with a flaming heart in her hand, crowned with a flaming brazier, and suckling a child, is Giottesque not only in allegorical conception but also in choice of type and treatment of drapery.

While admiring the tabernacle of Orsammichele, we are reminded that Orcagna was a goldsmith to begin with, and a painter. Sculpture he practised as an accessory. What the artists of Florence gained in delicacy of execution, accuracy of modelling, and precision of design by their apprenticeship to the goldsmith's trade, was hardly perhaps sufficient to compensate for loss of training in a larger style. It was difficult, we fancy, for men so educated to conceive the higher purposes of sculpture. Contented with elaborate workmanship and beauty of detail, they failed to attain to such independence of treatment as may be reached by sculptors who do not carry to their work the preconceptions of a narrower handicraft. Thus even Orcagna's masterpiece may strike us not as the plaything of a Pheidian genius condescending for once to 'breathe through silver,' but of a consummate goldsmith taxing the resources of his craft to form a monumental jewel.[1]

The façade of Orvieto was the final achievement of the first or architectural period of Italian sculpture. Giotto, Andrea Pisano, and Orcagna, formed the transition to the second period. To find one characteristic title for the style of the fifteenth century is not easy, since it was marked by

[1] The weighty chapter in Alberti's *Treatise on Painting*, lib. iii. cap. 5, might be used to support this paragraph.

many distinct peculiarities. If, however, we choose to call it pictorial, we shall sufficiently mark the quality of some eminent masters, and keep in view the supremacy of painting at this epoch. A great public enterprise at Florence brings together in honourable rivalry the chief craftsmen of the new age, and marks the advent of the Renaissance. When the Signory, in concert with the Arte de' Mercanti, decided to complete the bronze gates of the Baptistery in the first year of the fifteenth century, they issued a manifesto inviting the sculptors of Italy to prepare designs for competition. Their call was answered by Giacomo della Quercia of Siena, by Filippo Brunelleschi and Lorenzo di Cino Ghiberti of Florence, and by two other Tuscan artists of less note. The young Donatello, aged sixteen, is said to have been consulted as to the rival merits of the proofs submitted to the judges. Thus the four great masters of Tuscan art in its prime met before the Florentine Baptistery.[1] Giacomo della Quercia was excluded from the competition at an early stage; but the umpires wavered long between Ghiberti and Brunelleschi, until the latter, with notable generosity, feeling the superiority of his rival, and conscious perhaps that his own laurels were to be gathered in the field of architecture, withdrew his claim. In 1403, Ghiberti received the commission for the first of the two remaining gates. He afterwards obtained the second; and as they were not finished until 1452, the better part of his lifetime was spent upon them. He received in all a sum of 30,798 golden florins for his labour and the cost of the material employed.

The trial-pieces prepared by Brunelleschi and Ghiberti are now preserved in the Bargello.[2] Their subject is the

[1] Quercia, born 1374; Ghiberti, 1378; Brunelleschi, 1379; Donatello, 1386.

[2] They are engraved in the work cited above, *Le Tre Porte, seconda Porta*, Tavole i. ii.

'Sacrifice of Isaac;' and a comparison of the two leaves no doubt of Ghiberti's superiority. The faults of Brunelleschi's model are want of repose and absence of composition. Abraham rushes in a frenzy of murderous agitation at his son, who writhes beneath the knife already at his throat. The angel swoops from heaven with extended arms, reaching forth one hand to show the ram to Abraham, and clasping the patriarch's wrist with the other. The ram meanwhile is scratching his nose with his near hind leg; one of the servants is taking a thorn from his foot, while the other fills a cup from the stream at which the ass is drinking. Thus each figure has a separate uneasy action. Those critics who contend that the unrest of sixteenth-century sculpture was due to changes in artistic and religious feeling wrought by the Renaissance, would do well to examine this plate, and see how much account must be taken of the artist's temperament in forming their opinion. Brunelleschi adhered to the style and taste of the fifteenth century at its commencement; but the too fervid quality of his character impaired his work as a sculptor. Ghiberti, on the other hand, translated the calm of his harmonious nature into his composition. The angel leans from heaven and points to the ram, which is seated quietly and out of sight of the main actors. Isaac kneels in the attitude of a submissive victim, though his head is turned aside, as if attracted by the rush of pinions through the air; while Abraham has but just lifted his hand, and the sacrifice is only suggested as a possibility by the naked knife. The two servants are grouped below in conversation, one on each side of the browsing ass. This power of telling a story plainly, but without dramatic vehemence; of eliminating the painful details of the subject, and combining its chief motives into one agreeable whole, gave peculiar charm to Ghiberti's manner. It marked him as an artist distinguished by good taste.

How Della Quercia treated the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' we do not know. His bas-reliefs upon the façade of S. Petronio at Bologna, and round the font of S. John's Chapel in the cathedral of Siena, enable us, however, to compare his style with that of Ghiberti in the handling of a subject common to both, the 'Creation of Eve.'[1] There is no doubt but that Della Quercia was a formidable rival. Had the gates of the Baptistery been entrusted to his execution, we might have possessed a masterpiece of more heroic style. While smoothness and an almost voluptuous suavity of outline distinguish Ghiberti's naked Eve, gliding upheld by angels from the side of Adam at her Maker's bidding, Della Quercia's group, by the concentration of robust and rugged power, anticipates the style of Michael Angelo. Ghiberti treats the subject pictorially, placing his figures in a landscape, and lavishing attendant angels. Della Quercia, in obedience to the stricter laws of sculpture, restrains his composition to the three chief persons, and brings them into close connection. While Adam reclines asleep in a beautiful and highly studied attitude, Eve has just stepped forth behind him, and God stands robed in massive drapery, raising His hand as though to draw her into life. There is, perhaps, an excess of dramatic action in the lifted right leg of Eve, and too much of pantomimic language in the expressive hands of Eve and her

[1] The bas-reliefs of S. Petronio were executed between 1425 and 1435. Those of the font in the chapel of S. John (not the lower church of S. John), at Siena, are ascribed to Quercia, and are in his manner; but when they were finished I do not know. They set forth six subjects from the story of Adam and Eve, with a compartment devoted to Hercules killing the Centaur Nessus, and another to Samson or Hercules and the Lion. The choice of subjects, affording scope for treatment of the nude, is characteristic; so is the energy of handling, though rude in detail. It may be worth while to notice here a similar series of reliefs upon the façade of the Colleoni Chapel at Bergamo, representing scenes from the story of Adam in conjunction with the labours of Hercules.

Creator. The robe, again, in its voluminous and snaky coils, and the triangular nimbus of the Deity, convey an effect of heaviness rather than of majesty. Yet we feel, while studying this composition, that it is a noble and original attempt, falling but little short of supreme accomplishment. Without this antecedent sketch, Michael Angelo might not have matured the most complete of all his designs in the Sistine Chapel. The similarity between Della Quercia's bas-relief and Buonarroti's fresco of Eve is incontestable. The young Florentine, while an exile in Bologna, and engaged upon the shrine of S. Dominic, must have spent hours of study before the sculptures of S. Petronio; so that this seed of Della Quercia's sowing bore after many years the fruit of world-renowned achievement in Rome.

Two other memorable works of Della Quercia must be parenthetically mentioned. These are the Fonte Gaja on the public square of Siena, now unhappily restored, and the portrait of Ilaria del Carretto on her tomb in the cathedral of Lucca. The latter has long been dear to English students of Italian art through words inimitable for their strength of sympathetic criticism.[1]

Ghiberti was brought up as a goldsmith by his stepfather, and it is said that while a youth he spent much of his leisure in modelling portraits and casting imitations of antique gems and coins for his friends. At the same time he practised painting. We find him employed in decorating a palace at Rimini for Carlo Malatesta, when his stepfather recalled him to Florence, in order that he might compete for the gate of the Baptistery. It is probable that from this early training Ghiberti derived the delicacy of style and smoothness of execution that are reckoned among the chief merits of his work. He also developed a manner more pictorial than sculpturesque, which justifies our calling him a painter in

[1] Ruskin's *Modern Painters*, vol. ii. chap. vii., Repose.

bronze. When Sir Joshua Reynolds remarked, 'Ghiberti's landscape and buildings occupied so large a portion of the compartments, that the figures remained but secondary objects,'[1] his criticism might fairly have been taxed with some injustice even to the second of the two gates. Yet, though exaggerated in severity, his words convey a truth important for the understanding of this period of Italian art.

The first gate may be cited as the supreme achievement of bronze-casting in the Tuscan prime. In the second, by the introduction of elaborate landscapes and the massing together of figures arranged in multitudes at three and sometimes four distances, Ghiberti overstepped the limits that separate sculpture from painting. Having learned perspective from Brunelleschi, he was eager to apply this new science to his own craft, not discerning that it has no place in noble bas-relief. He therefore abandoned the classical and the early Tuscan tradition, whereby reliefs, whether high or low, are strictly restrained to figures arranged in line or grouped together without accessories. Instead of painting frescoes, he set himself to model in bronze whole compositions that might have been expressed with propriety in colour. The point of Sir Joshua's criticism, therefore, is that Ghiberti's practice of distributing figures on a small scale in spacious landscape framework was at variance with the severity of sculptural treatment. The pernicious effect of his example may be traced in much Florentine work of the mid Renaissance period which passed for supremely clever when it was produced. What the unique genius of Ghiberti made not merely pardonable but even admirable, became under other hands no less repulsive than the transference of pictorial effects to painted glass.[2]

[1] See Flaxman's *Lectures on Sculpture*, p. 310.

[2] This criticism of the 'Gate of Paradise' sounds even to the writer of it profane, and demands a palinode. Who, indeed, can affirm that he

That Ghiberti was not a great sculptor of statues is proved by his work at Orsammichele. He was no architect, as we know from his incompetence to do more than impede Brunelleschi in the building of the dome. He came into the world to create a new and inimitable style of hybrid beauty in those gates of Paradise. His susceptibility to the first influences of the classical revival deserves notice here, since it shows to what an extent a devotee of Greek art in the fifteenth century could worship the relics of antiquity without passing over into imitation. When the 'Hermaphrodite' was discovered in the vineyard of S. Celso, Ghiberti's admiration found vent in exclamations like the following: 'No tongue could describe the learning and art displayed in it, or do justice to its masterly style.' Another antique, found near Florence, must, he conjectures, have been hidden out of harm's way by 'some gentle spirit in the early days of Christianity.' 'The touch only,' he adds, 'can discover its beauties, which escape the sense of sight in any light.'[1] It would be impossible to express a reverential love of ancient art more tenderly than is done in these sentences. So intense was Ghiberti's passion for the Greeks, that he rejected Christian chronology and reckoned by Olympiads—a system that has thrown obscurity over his otherwise precious notes of Tuscan artists. In spite of this devotion, he never appears to have set himself consciously to reproduce the style of Greek sculpture, or to have set forth Hellenic ideas. He remained unaffectedly natural, and in a true sense Christian. The paganism of the Renaissance is a phrase with no more meaning for him than for that still more delicate Florentine spirit, Luca della Robbia; and if his works are classical, they

would wish the floating figure of Eve, or the three angels at Abraham's tent-door, other than they are?

[1] See the *Commentaries of Ghiberti*, printed in vol. i. of Vasari (Lemonnier, 1846).

are so only in Goethe's sense, when he pronounced, 'the point is for a work to be thoroughly good, and then it is sure to be classical.'

One great advantage of the early days of the Renaissance over the latter was this, that pseudo-paganism and pedantry had not as yet distorted the judgment or misdirected the aims of artists. Contact with the antique world served only to stimulate original endeavour, by leading the student back to the fountain of all excellence in nature, and by exhibiting types of perfection in technical processes. To ape the sculptors of Antinous, or to bring to life again the gods who died with Pan, was not yet longed for. Of the impunity with which a sculptor in that period could submit his genius to the service and the study of ancient art without sacrificing individuality, Donatello furnishes a still more illustrious example than Ghiberti. Early in his youth Donatello journeyed with Brunelleschi to Rome, in order to acquaint himself with the monuments then extant. How thoroughly he comprehended the classic spirit is proved by the bronze patera wrought for his patron Ruberto Martelli, and by the frieze of the triumphant Bacchus.[1] Yet the great achievements of his genius were Christian in their sentiment and realistic in their style. The bronze 'Magdalen' of the Florentine Baptistery and the bronze 'Baptist' of the Duomo at Siena[2] are executed with an unrelenting materialism, not alien indeed to the sincerity of classic art, but divergent from antique tradition, inasmuch as the ideas of repentant and prophetic asceticism had no place in Greek mythology.

Donatello, with the uncompromising candour of an artist bent on marking character, felt that he was bound to seize the very pith and kernel of his subject. If a Magdalen were demanded of him, he would not condescend to model a Venus

[1] The patera is at South Kensington, the frieze at Florence.
[2] As also the wooden Baptist in the Frari at Venice.

and then place a book and skull upon a rock beside her; nor did he imagine that the bloom and beauty of a laughing Faun were fitting attributes for the preacher of repentance. It remained for later artists, intoxicated with antique loveliness and corroded with worldly scepticism, to reproduce the outward semblance of Greek deities under the pretence of setting forth the myths of Christianity. Such compromise had not occurred to Donatello. The motive of his art was clearly apprehended, his method was sincere; certain phases of profound emotion had to be represented with the physical characteristics proper to them. The result, ugly and painful as it may sometimes be, was really more concordant with the spirit of Greek method than Lionardo's 'John' or Correggio's 'Magdalen.' That is to say, it was straightforward and truthful; whereas the strange caprices of the later Renaissance too often betrayed a double mind, disloyal alike to paganism and to Christianity, in their effort to combine divergent forces. It may still be argued that such conceptions as sorrow for sin and mortification of the flesh, unflinchingly portrayed by haggard gauntness in the saints of Donatello, are unfit for sculpturesque expression.

A more felicitous embodiment of modern feeling was achieved by Donatello in 'S. George' and 'David.' The former is a marble statue placed upon the north wall of Orsammichele; the latter is a bronze, cast for Cosimo de' Medici, and now exhibited in the Bargello.[1] Without striving to idealise his models, the sculptor has expressed in both the Christian conception of heroism, fearless in the face of danger, and sustained by faith. The naked beauty of the boy David and the mailed manhood of S. George are raised to a spiritual region by the type of feature and the pose of body selected to interpret their animating impulse. These

[1] There is another 'David,' by Donatello, in marble; also in the Bargello, scarcely less stiff and ugly than the 'Baptist.'

are no mere portraits of wrestlers, such as peopled the groves of Altis at Olympia, no ideals of physical strength translated into brass and marble, like the 'Hercules' of Naples or the Vatican. The one is a Christian soldier ready to engage Apollyon in battle to the death; the other the boy-hero of a marvellous romance. The body in both is but the shrine of an indwelling soul, the instrument and agent of a faith-directed will; and the crown of their conflict is no wreath of laurel or of parsley. In other words, the value of S. George and David to the sculptor lay not in their strength and youthful beauty—though he has endowed them with these excellent gifts—so much as in their significance for the eternal struggle of the soul with evil. The same power of expressing Christian sentiment in a form of perfect beauty, transcending the Greek type by profounder suggestion of feeling, is illustrated in the well-known low-relief of an angel's head in profile, technically one of Donatello's most masterly productions.[1]

It is no part of my present purpose to enumerate the many works of Donatello in marble and bronze; yet some allusion to their number and variety is necessary in order to show how widely his influence was diffused through Italy. In the monuments of Pope John XXIII., of Cardinal Brancacci, and of Bartolommeo Aragazzi, he subordinated his genius to the treatment of sepulchral and biographical subjects according to time-honoured Tuscan usage. They were severally placed in Florence, Naples, and Montepulciano. For the cathedral of Prato he executed bas-reliefs of dancing boys; a similar series, intended for the balustrades of the organ in S. Maria del Fiore, is now preserved in the Bargello museum. The exultation of movement has never been expressed in stone with more fidelity to the strict rules of

[1] The cast was published by the Arundel Society. The original belongs to Lord Elcho.

plastic art. For his friend and patron, Cosimo de' Medici, he cast in bronze the group of 'Judith and Holofernes'—a work that illustrates the clumsiness of realistic treatment, and deserves to be remembered chiefly for its strange fortunes. When the Medici fled from Florence in 1494, their palace was sacked; the new republic took possession of Donatello's 'Judith,' and placed it on a pedestal before the gate of the Palazzo Vecchio, with this inscription, ominous to would-be despots: *Exemplum salutis publicæ cives posuere. MCCCCXCV.* It now stands near Cellini's 'Perseus' under the Loggia de' Lanzi. For the pulpits of S. Lorenzo, Donatello made designs of intricate bronze bas-reliefs, which were afterwards completed by his pupil Bertoldo. These, though better known to travellers, are less excellent than the reliefs in bronze wrought by Donatello's own hand for the church of S. Anthony at Padua.[1] To that city he was called in 1451, in order that he might model the equestrian statue of Gattamelata. It still stands on the Piazza, a masterpiece of scientific bronze-founding, the first great portrait of a general on horseback since the days of Rome.[2] At Padua, in the hall of the Palazzo della Ragione, is also preserved the wooden horse, which is said to have been constructed by the sculptor for the noble house of Capodilista. These two examples of equestrian modelling marked an epoch in Italian statuary.

When Donato di Nicolo di Betto Bardi, called Donatello because men loved his sweet and cheerful temper, died in 1466 at the age of eighty, the brightest light of Italian sculpture in its most promising period was extinguished. Donatello's influence, felt far and wide through Italy, was

[1] It has been suggested, with good show of reason, that Mantegna was largely indebted to these bas-reliefs for his lofty style.

[2] This omits the statues of the Scaligers: but no mediæval work aimed at equal animation. The antique bronze horses at Venice and the statue of Marcus Aurelius must have been in Donatello's mind.

of inestimable value in correcting the false direction toward pictorial sculpture which Ghiberti, had he flourished alone at Florence, might have given to the art. His style was always eminently masculine. However tastes may differ about the positive merits of his several works, there can be no doubt that the principles of sincerity, truth to nature, and technical accuracy they illustrate, were all-important in an age that lent itself too readily to the caprices of the fancy and the puerilities of florid taste. To regret that Donatello lacked Ghiberti's exquisite sense of beauty, is tantamount to wishing that two of the greatest artists of the world had made one man between them.

Donatello did not, in the strict sense of the term, found a school.[1] Andrea Verocchio, goldsmith, painter, and worker in bronze, was the most distinguished of his pupils. To all the arts he practised, Verocchio applied limited powers, a meagre manner, and a prosaic mind. Yet few men have exercised at a very critical moment a more decided influence. The mere fact that he numbered Lionardo da Vinci, Lorenzo di Credi, and Pietro Perugino among his scholars, proves the esteem of his contemporaries; and when we have observed that the type of face selected by Lionardo and transmitted to his followers, appears also in the pictures of Lorenzo di Credi and is first found in the 'David' of Verocchio, we have a right to affirm that the master of these men was an artist of creative genius as well as a careful workman. Florence still points with pride to the 'Incredulity of Thomas' on the eastern wall of Orsammichele, to the 'Boy and Dolphin' in the court of the Palazzo Vecchio, and to the 'David' of this sculptor: but the first is spoiled by heaviness and angularity

[1] The sculptor of a beautiful tomb erected for the Countess of Montorio and her infant daughter in the church of S. Bernardino at Aquila was probably Andrea dell' Aquila, a pupil of Donatello. See Perkins's *Italian Sculptors*, pp. 46, 47.

of drapery; the second, though fanciful and marked by fluttering movement, is but a caprice; the third outdoes the hardest work of Donatello by its realism. Verocchio's 'David,' a lad of some seventeen years, has the lean, veined arms of a stone-hewer or gold-beater. As a faithful portrait of the first Florentine prentice who came to hand, this statue might have merit but for the awkward cuirass and kilt that partly drape the figure.

The name of Verocchio is best known to the world through the equestrian statue of Bartolommeo Colleoni. When this great Condottiere, the last surviving general trained by Braccio da Montone, died in 1475, he bequeathed a large portion of his wealth to Venice, on condition that his statue on horseback should be erected in the Piazza di S. Marco. Colleoni, having long held the bâton of the Republic, desired that after death his portrait, in his habit as he lived, should continue to look down on the scene of his old splendour. By an ingenious quibble the Senators adhered to the letter of his will without infringing a law that forbade them to charge the square of S. Mark with monuments. They ruled that the piazza in front of the Scuola di S. Marco, better known as the Campo di S. Zanipolo, might be chosen as the site of Colleoni's statue, and to Andrea Verocchio was given the commission for its erection.

Andrea died in 1488 before the model for the horse was finished. The work was completed, and the pedestal was supplied by Alessandro Leopardi. To Verocchio, profiting by the example of Donatello's 'Gattamelata,' must be assigned the general conception of this statue; but the breath of life that animates both horse and rider, the richness of detail that enhances the massive grandeur of the group, and the fiery spirit of its style of execution were due to the Venetian genius of Leopardi. Verocchio alone produced nothing so truly magnificent. This joint creation of Florentine science

and Venetian fervour is one of the most precious monuments of the Renaissance. From it we learn what the men who fought the bloodless battles of the commonwealths, and who aspired to principality, were like. 'He was tall,' writes a biographer of Colleoni,[1] 'of erect and well-knit figure, and of well-proportioned limbs. His complexion tended rather to brown, marked withal by bright and sanguine flesh-tints. He had black eyes; their brilliancy was vivid, their gaze terrible and penetrating. In the outline of his nose and in all his features he displayed a manly nobleness combined with goodness and prudence.' Better phrases cannot be chosen to describe his statue.

While admiring this masterpiece and dwelling on its royal style, we are led to deplore most bitterly the loss of the third equestrian statue of the Renaissance. Nothing now remains but a few technical studies made by Lionardo da Vinci for his portrait of Francesco Sforza. The two elaborate models he constructed and the majority of his minute designs have been destroyed. He intended, we are told, to represent the first Duke of the Sforza dynasty on his charger, trampling the body of a prostrate and just conquered enemy. Rubens' transcript from the 'Battle of the Standard,' enables us to comprehend to some extent how Lionardo might have treated this motive. The severe and cautious style of Donatello, after gaining freedom and fervour from Leopardi, was adapted to the ideal presentation of dramatic passion by Lionardo. Thus Gattamelata, Colleoni, and Francesco Sforza would, through their statues, have marked three distinct phases in the growth of art. The final effort of Italian sculpture to express human activity in the person of a mounted warrior has perished. In this sphere we possess nothing which, like

[1] *Istoria della Vita e Fatti dell' eccellentissimo Capitano di guerra Bartolommeo Colleoni*, scritta per Pietro Spino. Republished, 1859.

the tombs of S. Lorenzo in relation to sepulchral statuary, completes a series of development.

If Donatello founded no school, this was far more the case with Ghiberti. His supposed pupil, Antonio del Pollajuolo, showed no sign of Ghiberti's influence, but struck out for himself a style distinguished by almost brutal energy and bizarre realism—characteristics the very opposite to those of his master. If the bronze relief of the 'Crucifixion' in the Bargello be really Pollajuolo's, we may even trace a leaning to Verocchio in his manner. The emphatic passion of the women recalls the group of mourners round the death-bed of Selvaggia Tornabuoni in Verocchio's celebrated bas-relief. Pollajuolo, like so many Florentine artists, was a goldsmith, a painter, and a worker in niello, before he took to sculpture. As a goldsmith he is said to have surpassed all his contemporaries, and his mastery over this art influenced his style in general. What we chiefly notice, however, in his choice of subjects is a frenzy of murderous enthusiasm, a grimness of imagination, rare among Italian artists. The picture in the Uffizzi of 'Hercules and Antæus' and the well-known engraving of naked men fighting a series of savage duels in a wood, might be chosen as emphatic illustrations of his favourite motives. The fiercest emotions of the Renaissance find expression in the clenched teeth, strained muscles, knotted brows, and tense nerves, depicted by Pollajuolo with eccentric energy. We seem to be assisting at some of those combats *a steccato chiuso* wherein Sixtus IV. delighted, or to have before our eyes a fray between Crocensi and Vallensi in the streets of Rome.[1] The same remarks apply to the terra-cotta relief by Pollajuolo in the South Kensington Museum. This piece displays the struggles of twelve naked men, divided into six pairs of combatants. Two of the couples hold short chains with the left hand, and seek to

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 310, note 2.

stab each other with the right. In the case of another two couples the fight is over, and the victor is insulting his fallen foe. In each of the remaining pairs one gladiator is on the point of yielding to his adversary. There are thus three several moments of duel to the death, each illustrated by two couples. The mathematical distribution of these dreadful groups gives an effect of frozen passion; while the vigorous workmanship displays not only an enthusiasm for muscular anatomy, but a real sympathy with blood-fury in the artist.

There was, therefore, a certain propriety in the choice of Pollajuolo to cast the sepulchre of Sixtus IV. in bronze at Rome. The best judges complain, not without reason, that the allegories surrounding this tomb are exaggerated and affected in style; yet the dead Pope, stretched in pomp upon his bier, commands more than merely historical interest; while the figures, seated as guardians round the old man, terrible in death, communicate an impression of monumental majesty. Criticised in detail, each separate figure may be faulty. The composition, as a whole, is picturesque and grandiose. The same can scarcely be said about the tomb of Innocent VIII., erected by Antonio and his brother Piero del Pollajuolo. While it perpetuates the memory of an uninteresting Pontiff, it has but little, as a work of art, to recommend it. The Pollajuoli were not great sculptors. In the history of Italian art they deserve a place, because of the vivid personality impressed upon some portions of their work. Few draughtsmen carried the study of muscular anatomy so far as Antonio.[1]

Luca della Robbia, whose life embraced the first eighty years of the fifteenth century, offers in many important respects a contrast to his contemporaries Ghiberti and Donatello, and still more to their immediate followers. He made

[1] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. ii. chap. xvi., may be consulted as to the several claims of the two brothers

his art as true to life as it is possible to be, without the rugged realism of Donatello or the somewhat effeminate graces of Ghiberti. The charm of his work is never impaired by scientific mannerism—that stumbling-block to critics like De Stendhal in the art of Florence; nor does it suffer from the picturesqueness of a sentimental style. How to render the beauty of nature in her most delightful moments—taking us with him into the holiest of holies, and handling the sacred vessels with a child's confiding boldness—was a secret known to Luca della Robbia alone. We may well find food for meditation in the innocent and cheerful inspiration of this man, whose lifetime coincided with a period of sordid passions and debased ambition in the Church and States of Italy.

Luca was apprenticed in his youth to a goldsmith; but of what he wrought before the age of forty-five, we know but little.[1] At that time his faculty had attained full maturity, and he produced the groups of dancing children and choristers intended for the organ gallery of the Duomo. Wholly free from affectation, and depending for effect upon no merely decorative detail, these bas-reliefs deserve the praise bestowed by Dante on the sculpture seen in Purgatory:[2]—

> Dinanzi a noi pareva si verace,
> Quivi intagliato in un atto soave,
> Che non sembrava immagine che tace.

Movement has never been suggested in stone with less exaggeration, nor have marble lips been made to utter sweeter and more varied music. Luca's true perception of the limits to be observed in sculpture, appears most eminently in the glazed terra-cotta work by which he is best known. An ordinary artist might have found the temptation to aim at

[1] His bas-reliefs on Giotto's campanile of Grammar, Astronomy, Geometry, Plato, Aristotle, &c., are anterior to 1445; and even about this date there is uncertainty, some authorities fixing it at 1435.

[2] *Purg.* x. 37, and xi. 68.

showy and pictorial effects in this material overwhelming. Luca restrained himself to pure white on pale blue, and preserved an exquisite simplicity of line in all his compositions. There is an almost unearthly beauty in the profiles of his Madonnas, a tempered sweetness in the modulation of their drapery and attitude, that prove complete mastery in the art of rendering evanescent moments of expression, the most fragile subtleties of the emotions that can stir a tranquil spirit. Andrea della Robbia, the nephew of Luca, with his four sons, Giovanni, Luca, Ambrogio, and Girolamo, continued to manufacture the glazed earthenware of Luca's invention. These men, though excellent artificers, lacked the fine taste of their teacher. Coarser colours were introduced; the eye was dazzled with variety; but the power of speaking to the soul as Luca spoke was lost.[1]

After the Della Robbias, this is the place to mention Agostino di Gucci or di Duccio,[2] a sculptor who handled terra-cotta somewhat in the manner of Donatello's flat-relief, introducing more richness of detail and aiming at more passion than Luca's taste permitted. For the oratory of S. Bernardino at Perugia he designed the façade partly in stone and partly in baked clay—crowded with figures, flying, singing, playing upon instruments of music, with waving draperies and windy hair and the ecstasy of movement in their delicately modelled limbs. If nothing else remained of Agostino's workmanship, this façade alone would place him in the first rank of contemporary artists. He owed something, perhaps, to his material; for terra-cotta has the charm of improvisation. The hand, obedient to the brain, has made it in one moment what

[1] Among the very best works of the later Robbian school may be cited the frieze upon the façade of the Ospedale del Ceppo at Pistoja, representing in varied colour, and with graceful vivacity, the Seven Acts of Mercy. Date about 1525.

[2] He calls himself Agostinus Florentinus Lapicida on his facade of the Oratory of S. Bernardino.

it is, and no slow hours of labour at the stone have dulled the first caprice of the creative fancy. Work, therefore, which, if translated into marble, might have left our sympathy unstirred, affects us with keen pleasure in the mould of plastic clay. What prodigality of thought and invention has been lavished on the terra-cotta models of unknown Italian artists! What forms and faces, beautiful as shapes of dreams, and, like dreams, so airy that we think they will take flight and vanish, lean to greet us from cloisters and palace fronts in Lombardy! To catalogue their multitude would be impossible. It is enough to select one instance out of many; this shall be taken from the chapel of S. Peter Martyr in S. Eustorgio at Milan. High up around the cupola runs a frieze of angels, singing together and dancing with joined hands, while bells composed of fruits and flowers hang down between them. Each angel is an individual shape of joy; the soul in each moves to its own deep melody, but the music made of all is one. Their raiment flutters, the bells chime; the chorus of their gladness falls like voices through a star-lit heaven, half-heard in dreams and everlastingly remembered.

Four sculptors, the younger contemporaries of Luca della Robbia, and marked by certain common qualities, demand attention next. All the work of Antonio Rossellino, Matteo Civitali, Mino da Fiesole, and Benedetto da Majano, is distinguished by sweetness, grace, tranquillity, and self-restraint—as though these artists had voluntarily imposed limits on their genius, refusing to trespass beyond a traced circle of religious subjects, or to aim at effects unrealisable by purity of outline, suavity of expression, delicacy of feeling, and urbanity of style. The charm of manner they possess in common, can scarcely be defined except by similes. The innocence of childhood, the melody of a lute or song-bird as distinguished from the music of an orchestra, the rathe tints of early dawn, cheerful light on shallow streams, the serenity of a simple and untainted nature

that has never known the world—many such images occur to the mind while thinking of the sculpture of these men. To charge them with insipidity, immaturity, and monotony, would be to mistake the force of genius and skill displayed by them. We should rather assume that they confined themselves to certain types of tranquil beauty, without caring to realise more obviously striking effects, and that this was their way of meeting the requirements of sculpture considered as a Christian art. The melody of their design, meanwhile, is like the purest song-music of Pergolese or Salvator Rosa, unapproachably perfect in simple outline, and inexhaustibly refreshing.

Though it is possible to characterise the style of these sculptors by some common qualities observable in their work, it should rather be the aim of criticism to point out their differences. Antonio Rossellino, for example, might be distinguished by his leaning toward the manner of Ghiberti, whose landscape backgrounds he has adopted in the circular medallions of his monumental sculpture. A fine perception of the poetic capabilities of Christian art is displayed in Rossellino's idyllic treatment of the Nativity—the adoration of the shepherds, the hush of reverential stillness in the worship Mary pays her infant son.[1] To the qualities of sweetness and tranquillity rare dignity is added in the monument of the young Cardinal di Portogallo.[2] The sublimity of the slumber that is death has never been more nobly and feelingly portrayed than in the supine figure and sleeping features of this most beautiful young man, who lies watched by angels beneath a heavy-curtained canopy. The genii of eternal repose modelled by Greek sculptors are twin-brothers

[1] See especially a roundel in the Bargello, and the altar-piece in the church of Monte Oliveto at Naples. Those who wish to understand Rossellino should study him in the latter place.

[2] In the church of Samminiato, near Florence.

of Love, on whom perpetual slumber has descended amid poppy-fields by Lethe's stream. The turmoil of the world is over for them; they will never wake again; they do not even dream. Sleep is the only power that still has life in them. But the Christian cannot thus conceive the mystery of the soul 'fallen on sleep.' His art must suggest a time of waiting and a time of waking; and this it does partly through the ministration of attendant angels, who would not be standing there on guard if the clay-cold corpse had no futurity, partly by breathing upon the limbs and visage of the dead a spirit as of life suspended for a while. Thus the soul herself is imaged in the marble 'most sweetly slumbering in the gates of dreams.'

What Vespasiano tells us of this cardinal, born of the royal house of Portugal, adds the virtue of sincerity to Rossellino's work, proving there is no flattery of the dead man in his sculpture.[1] 'Among his other admirable virtues,' says the biographer, 'Messer Jacopo di Portogallo determined to preserve his virginity, though he was beautiful above all others of his age. Consequently he avoided all things that might prove impediments to his vow, such as free discourse, the society of women, balls, and songs. In this mortal flesh he lived as though he had been free from it—the life, we may say, rather of an angel than a man. And if his biography were written from his childhood to his death, it would be not only an ensample, but confusion to the world. Upon his monument the hand was modelled from his own, and the face is very like him, for he was most lovely in his person, but still more in his soul.'

While contemplating this monument of the young cardinal, we feel that the Italians of that age understood sepulchral sculpture far better than their immediate successors. They knew how to carve the very soul, according to the lines which

[1] *Vite di Uomini Illustri*, pp. 152–157.

our Webster, a keen observer of all things relating to the grave and death, has put into Jolenta's lips:—

> But indeed,
> If ever I would have mine drawn to the life,
> I would have a painter steal it at such time
> I were devoutly kneeling at my prayers;
> There is then a heavenly beauty in't; *the soul*
> *Moves in the superficies.*

The same Webster condemns that evil custom of aping life and movement on the monuments of dead men, which began to obtain when the motives of pure repose had been exhausted. 'Why,' asks the Duchess of Malfi, 'do we grow fantastical in our death-bed? Do we affect fashion in the grave?' 'Most ambitiously,' answers Bosola: 'princes' images on their tombs do not lie as they were wont, seeming to pray up to heaven; but with their hands under their cheeks (as if they died of the toothache): they are not carved with their eyes fixed upon the stars; but, as their minds were wholly bent upon the world, the self-same way they seem to turn their faces.' A more trenchant criticism than this could hardly have been pronounced upon Andrea Contucci di Monte Sansavino's tombs of Ascanio Sforza and Girolamo della Rovere, if Bosola had been standing before them in the church of S. Maria del Popolo when he spoke. Were it the function of monumental sculpture to satirise the dead, or to point out their characteristic faults for the warning of posterity, then the sepulchres of these worldly cardinals of Sixtus IV.'s creation would be artistically justified. But the object of art is not this. The idea of death, as conceived by Christians, has to be portrayed. The repose of the just, the resurrection of the body, and the coming judgment, afford sufficient scope for treatment of good men and bad alike. Or if the sculptor have sublime imagination, he may, like Michael Angelo, suggest the alternations of the day and

night, slumber and waking, whereby 'our little life is rounded with a sleep.'

This digression will hardly be thought superfluous when we reflect how large a part of the sculptor's energy was spent on tombs in Italy. Matteo Civitali of Lucca was at least Rossellino's equal in the sculpturesque delineation of spiritual qualities; but the motives he chose for treatment were more varied. All his work is penetrated with deep, prayerful, intense feeling; as though the artist's soul, poured forth in ecstasy and adoration, had been given to the marble. This is especially true of two angels kneeling upon the altar of the Chapel of the Sacrament in Lucca Cathedral. Civitali, by singular good fortune, was chosen in the best years of his life to adorn the cathedral of his native city; and it is here, rather than at Genoa, where much of his sculpture may also be seen, that he deserves to be studied. For the people of Lucca he designed the Chapel of the Santo Volto—a gem of the purest Renaissance architecture—and a pulpit in the same style. His most remarkable sculpture is to be found in three monuments: the tombs of Domenico Bertini and Pietro da Noceto, and the altar of S. Regulus. The last might be chosen as an epitome of all that is most characteristic in Tuscan sculpture of the earlier Renaissance. It is built against the wall, and architecturally designed so as to comprehend a full-length figure of the bishop stretched upon his bier and watched by angels, a group of Madonna and her child seated above him, a row of standing saints below, and a predella composed of four delicately finished bas-reliefs. Every part of this complex work is conceived with spirit and executed with care; and the various elements are so combined as to make one composition, the body of the saint on his sarcophagus forming the central object of the whole.

To do more than briefly mention the minor sculptors of this group would be impossible. Mino di Giovanni, called

Da Fiesole, was characterised by grace that tended to degenerate into formality. The tombs in the Abbey of Florence have an almost infantine sweetness of style, which might be extremely piquant, were it not that Mino pushed this quality in other works to the verge of mannerism.[1] Their architectural features are the same as those of similar monuments in Tuscany:—a shallow recess, flanked by Renaissance pilasters, and roofed with a semicircular arch; within the recess, the full-length figure of the dead man on a marble coffin of antique design; in the lunette above, a Madonna carved in low relief.[2] Mino's bust of Bishop Salutati in the cathedral church of Fiesole is a powerful portrait, no less distinguished for vigorous individuality than consummate workmanship. The waxlike finish of the finely chiselled marble alone betrays that delicacy which with Mino verged on insipidity. The same faculty of character delineation is seen in three profiles, now in the Bargello Museum, attributed to Mino. They represent Frederick Duke of Urbino, Battista Sforza, and Galeazzo Sforza. The relief is very low, rising at no point more than half an inch above the surface of the ground, but so carefully modulated as to present a wonderful variety of light and shade, and to render the facial expression with great vividness.

[1] These tombs in the Badia were erected for Count Ugo, Governor of Tuscany under Otho II., and for Messer Bernardo Giugni. Mino also made the tomb for Pope Paul II., parts of which are preserved in the Grotte of S. Peter's. At Rome he carved a tabernacle for S. Maria in Trastevere, and at Volterra a ciborium for the Baptistery—one of his most sympathetic productions. The altars in the Baglioni Chapel of S. Pietro Cassinense at Perugia, in S. Ambrogio at Florence, and in the cathedral of Fiesole, and the pulpit in the Duomo at Prato, may be mentioned among his best works.

[2] Besides Civitali's altar of S. Regulus, and the tomb of Pietro da Noceto already mentioned, Bernardo Rossellino's monument to Lionardo Bruni, and Desiderio's monument to Carlo Marsuppini in S. Croce at Florence, may be cited as eminent examples of Tuscan sepulchres.

Desiderio da Settignano, one of Donatello's few scholars, was endowed with the same gift of exquisite taste as his friend Mino da Fiesole;[1] but his inventive faculty was bolder, and his genius more robust, in spite of the profuse ornamentation and elaborate finish of his masterpiece, the tomb of Carlo Marsuppini in S. Croce. The bust he made of Marietta di Palla degli Strozzi enables us to compare his style in portraiture with that of Mino.[2] It would be hard to find elsewhere a more captivating combination of womanly sweetness and dignity. We feel, in looking at these products of the best age of Italian sculpture, that the artists who conceived them were, in the truest sense of the word, gentle. None but men courteous and unaffected could have carved a face like that of Marietta Strozzi, breathing the very spirit of urbanity. To express the most amiable qualities of a living person in a work of art that should suggest emotional tranquillity by harmonious treatment, and indicate the temperance of a disciplined nature by self-restraint and moderation of style, and to do this with the highest technical perfection, was the triumph of fifteenth-century sculpture.

An artist who claims a third place beside Mino and his friend, 'il bravo Desider si dolce e bello,'[3] is Benedetto da Majano. In Benedetto's bas-reliefs at San Gemignano, carved for the altars of those unlovely Tuscan worthies, S. Fina and S. Bartolo, we find a pictorial treatment of legendary subjects, proving that he had studied Ghirlandajo's frescoes. The same is true about his pulpit in S. Croce at Florence, his treatment of the story of S. Savino at Faenza, and his

[1] The wooden statue of the Magdalen in Santa Trinità at Florence shows Desiderio's approximation to the style of his master. She is a careworn and ascetic saint, with the pathetic traces of great beauty in her emaciated face.

[2] This bust is in the Palazzo Strozzi at Florence.

[3] So Giovanni Santi, Raphael's father, described Desiderio da Settignano.

'Annunciation' in the church of Monte Oliveto at Naples. Benedetto, indeed, may be said to illustrate the working of Ghiberti's influence by his liberal use of landscape and architectural backgrounds; but the style is rather Ghirlandajo's than Ghiberti's. If it was a mistake in the sculptors of that period to subordinate their art to painting, the error, we feel, was aggravated by the imitation of a manner so prosaic as that of Ghirlandajo. That Benedetto began life as a *tarsiatore* may perhaps help to account for his pictorial style in bas-relief.[1] In estimating his total claim as an artist, we must not forget that he designed the formidable and splendid Strozzi Palace.

It will be observed that all the sculptors hitherto mentioned have been Tuscans; and this is due to no mere accident—nor yet to caprice on the part of their historian. Though the other districts of Italy produced admirable workmen, the direction given to this art proceeded from Tuscany. Florence, the metropolis of modern culture, determined the course of the æsthetical Renaissance. Even at Rimini we cannot account for the carvings in low relief, so fanciful, so delicately wrought, and so profusely scattered over the side chapels of S. Francesco, without the intervention of two Florentines, Bernardo Ciuffagni and Donatello's pupil Simone; while in the palace of Urbino we trace some hand not unlike that of Mino da Fiesole at work upon the mouldings of door and architrave, cornice and high-built chimney.[2] Not only do we thus find

[1] The following story is told about Benedetto's youth. He made two large inlaid chests or *cassoni*, adorned with all the skill of a worker in tarsia, or wood-mosaic, and carried these with him to King Matthias Corvinus, of Hungary. Part of his journey was performed by sea. On arriving and unpacking his chests, he found that the sea-damp had unglued the fragile wood-mosaic, and all his work was spoiled. This determined him to practise the more permanent art of sculpture. See Perkins, vol. i. p. 228.

[2] For further description of the sculpture at Rimini, I may refer to my *Sketches in Italy and Greece*, pp. 250–252. For the student of Italian art, who has no opportunity of visiting Rimini, it is greatly to

Tuscan craftsmen or their scholars employed on all the great public buildings throughout Italy; but it also happens that, except in Tuscany, the decoration of churches and palaces is not unfrequently anonymous.

This does not, however, interfere with the truth that sculpture, like all the arts, assumed a somewhat different character in each Italian city. The Venetian stone-carvers leaned from the first to a richer and more passionate style than the Florentine, reproducing the types of Cima's and Bellini's paintings.[1] Whole families, like the Bregni—classes, like the Lombardi—schools, like that of Alessandro Leopardi, worked together on the monumental sculpture of S. Zanipolo. In the tombs of the Doges the old Pisan motive of the curtains (first used by Arnolfo di Cambio at Orvieto, and afterwards with grand effect by Giovanni Pisano at Perugia) is expanded into a sumptuous tent-canopy. Pages and genii and mailed heroes take the place of angels, and the marine details of Roman reliefs are copied in the subordinate decoration. At Verona the mediæval tombs of the Scaligers, with their vast chest-like sarcophagi and mounted warriors, exhibit features markedly different from the monuments of Tuscany; while the mixture of fresco with sculpture, in monuments like that of the Cavalli in S. Anastasia, and in many altar-pieces, is at variance with

be regretted that these reliefs have never yet even in photography been reproduced. The palace of Duke Frederick at Urbino was designed by Luziano, a Dalmatian architect, and continued by Baccio Pontelli, a Florentine. The reliefs of dancing Cupids, white on blue ground, with wings and hair gilt, and the children holding pots of roses and gilly-flowers, in one of its great rooms, may be selected for special mention. Ambrogio or Ambrogino da Milano, none of whose handiwork is found in his native district, and who may therefore be supposed to have learned and practised his art elsewhere, was the sculptor of these truly genial reliefs.

[1] See, for example, the remarkable bas-relief of the Doge Lionardo Loredano engraved by Perkins, *Italian Sculptors*, p. 201.

Florentine usage. On the terra-cotta mouldings, so frequent in Lombard cities, I have already had occasion to touch briefly. They almost invariably display a feeling for beauty more sensuous, with less of scientific purpose in their naturalism, than is common in the Tuscan style. Guido Mazzoni of Modena, called Il Modanino, may be mentioned as the sculptor who freed terra-cotta from its dependence upon architecture, and who modelled groups of overpowering dramatic realism. His 'Pietà,' in the Church of Monte Oliveto at Naples, is valuable, less for its passionate intensity of expression than for the portraits of Pontano, Sannazzaro, and Alfonso of Aragon.[1] This sub-species of sculpture was freely employed in North Italy to stimulate devotion, and to impress the people with lively pictures of the Passion. The Sacro Monte at Varallo, for example, is covered with a multitude of chapels, each one of which presents some chapter of Bible history dramatically rendered by life-size groups of terra-cotta figures. Some of these were designed by eminent painters, and executed by clever modellers in clay. Even now they are scarcely less stirring to the mind of a devout spectator than the scenes of a mediæval Mystery may have been.

The Certosa of Pavia, lastly, is the centre of a school of sculpture that has little in common with the Florentine tradition. Antonio Amadeo[2] and Andrea Fusina, acting in

[1] Another Modenese, Antonio Begarelli, born in 1479, developed this art of the *plasticatore*, with quite as much pictorial impressiveness, and in a style of stricter science, than his predecessor Il Modanino. His masterpieces are the 'Deposition from the Cross' in S. Francesco, and the 'Pietà' in S. Pietro, of his native city.

[2] The name of this great master is variously written—Giovanni Antonio Amadeo, or Omodeo, or degli Amadei, or de' Madeo, or a Madeo—pointing possibly to the town Madeo as his native place. Through a long life he worked upon the fabric of the Milanese Duomo, the Certosa of Pavia, and the Chapel of Colleoni at Bergamo. To him we owe the general design of the façade of the Certosa and the cupola of the Duomo of Milan. For the details of his work and an estimate of his capacity, see Perkins, *Italian Sculptors*, pp. 127–137.

concert with Ambrogio Borgognone the painter, gave it in the fifteenth century that character of rich and complex decorative beauty which many generations of artists were destined to continue and complete. Among the countless sculptors employed upon its marvellous façade Amadeo asserts an individuality above the rest, which is further manifested in his work in the Cappella Colleoni at Bergamo. We there learn to know him, not only as an enthusiastic cultivator of the mingled Christian and pagan manner of the *quattrocento*, but as an artist in the truest sense of the word sympathetic. The sepulchral portrait of Medea, daughter of the great Condottiere, has a grace almost beyond that of Della Quercia's 'Ilaria.'[1] Much, no doubt, is due to the peculiarly fragile beauty of the girl herself, who lies asleep with little crisp curls clustering upon her forehead, and with a string of pearls around her slender throat. But the sensibility to loveliness so delicate, and the power to render it in marble with so ethereal a touch upon the rigid stone, belong to the sculptor, and win for him our worship.

The list of fifteenth-century sculptors is almost ended; and already, on the threshold of the sixteenth, stands the mighty form of Michael Angelo. Andrea Contucci da Sansavino and his pupil Jacopo Tatti, called also Sansovino, after his master, must, however, next be mentioned as continuing the Florentine tradition without subservience to the style of Buonarroti. Andrea da Sansavino was a sculptor in whom for the first time the faults of the mid-Renaissance period are glaringly apparent. He persistently sacrificed simplicity of composition to decorative ostentation, and tranquillity of

[1] This statue was originally intended for a chapel built and endowed by Colleoni at Basella, near Bergamo. When he determined to erect his chapel in S. Maria Maggiore at Bergamo, he entrusted the execution of this new work to Amadeo, and the monument of Medea was subsequently placed there.

feeling to theatrical effect. The truth of this will be acknowledged by all who have studied the tombs of the cardinals in S. Maria del Popolo already mentioned,[1] and the bas-reliefs upon the Santa Casa at Loreto. In technical workmanship Andrea proved himself an able craftsman, modelling marble with the plasticity of wax, and lavishing patterns of the most refined invention. Yet the decorative prodigality of this master corresponded to the frigid and stylistic graces of the neo-Latin poets. It was so much mannerism—adopted without real passion from the antique, and applied with a rhetorical intention. Those acanthus scrolls and honeysuckle borders, in spite of their consummate finish, fail to arrest attention, leaving the soul as unstirred as the Ovidian cadences of Bembo.

Jacopo Tatti was a genius of more distinction. Together with San Gallo and Bramante he studied the science of architecture in Rome, where he also worked at the restoration of newly discovered antiques, and cast in bronze a copy of the 'Laocoon.' Thus equipped with the artistic learning of his age, he was called in 1523 by the Doge, Andrea Gritti, to Venice. The material pomp of Venice at this epoch, and the pride of her unrivalled luxury, affected his imagination so powerfully that his genius, tutored by Florentine and Umbrian masters among the ruins of old Rome, became at once Venetian. In the history of the Renaissance the names of Titian and Aretino, themselves acclimatised aliens, are inseparably connected with that of their friend Sansovino. At Venice he lived until his death in 1570, building the Zecca, the Library, the Scala d'Oro in the Ducal Palace, and the Loggietta beneath the bell-tower of S. Mark. In all his work he subordinated sculpture to architecture, and his statuary is conceived in the *bravura* manner of Renaissance paganism. Whatever may be the

[1] See above, p. 113. I have spelt the name *Sansovino*, when applied to Jacopo Tatti, in accordance with time-honoured usage.

faults of Sansovino in both arts, it cannot be denied that he expressed, in a style peculiar to himself, the large voluptuous external life of Venice at a moment when this city was the Paris or the Corinth of Renaissance Europe. At the same time, the shallowness of Sansovino's inspiration as a sculptor is patent in his masterpieces of parade—the 'Neptune' and the 'Mars,' guarding the Scala d' Oro. Separated from the architecture of the court and staircase, they are insignificant in spite of their colossal scale. In their place they add a haughty grandeur, by the contrast which their flowing forms and arrogant attitudes present to the severer lines of the construction. But they are devoid of artistic sincerity, and occupy the same relation to true sculpture as flourishes of rhetoric, however brilliant, to poetry embodying deep thought or passion. At first sight they impose: on further acquaintance we find them chiefly interesting as illustrations of a potent civic life upon the wane, gorgeous in its decay.

Sansovino was a first-rate craftsman. The most finished specimen of his skill is the bronze door of the Sacristy of S. Marco, upon which he is said to have worked through twenty years. Portraits of the sculptor, Titian, and Pietro Aretino are introduced into the decorative border. These heads start from the surface of the gate with astonishing vivacity. That Aretino should thus daily assist in effigy at the procession of priests bearing the sacred emblems from the sacristy to the high altar of S. Mark, is one of the most characteristic proofs of sixteenth-century indifference to things holy and things profane.

Jacopo Sansovino marks the final intrusion of paganism into modern art. The classical revival had worked but partially and indirectly upon Ghiberti and Donatello—not because they did not feel it most intensely, but because they clung to nature far more closely than to antique precedent. This enthusiasm inspired Sansovino with the best and

strongest qualities that he can boast; and if his genius had been powerful enough to resist the fascination of merely rhetorical effects, he might have produced a perfect restoration of the classic style. His was no lifeless or pedantic imitation of antique fragments, but a real expression of the fervour with which the modern world hailed the discoveries revealed to it by scholarship. This is said advisedly. The most beautiful and spirited pagan statue of the Renaissance period, justifying the estimate here made of Sansovino's genius, is the 'Bacchus' exhibited in the Bargello Museum. Both the Bacchus and the Satyriscus at his side are triumphs of realism, irradiated and idealised by the sculptor's vivid sense of natural gladness. Considered as a restitution of the antique manner, this statue is decidedly superior to the 'Bacchus' of Michael Angelo. While the mundane splendour of Venice gave body and fulness to Sansovino's paganism, he missed the self-restraint and purity of taste peculiar to the studious shades of Florence. In his style, both architectural and sculptural, the neo-pagan sensuality of Italy expanded all its bloom.

For the artist at this period a Greek myth and a Christian legend were all one. Both afforded the occasion for displaying technical skill in fluent forms, devoid of any but voluptuous feeling; while both might be subordinated to rich effects of decoration.[1] To this point the intellectual culture of the fifteenth century had brought the plastic arts of Italy, by a process similar to that which ended in the 'Partus Virginis' of Sannazzaro. They were still indisputably vigorous, and working in accordance with the movement of the modern spirit. Yet the synthesis they attempted to effect between heathenism and Christianity, by a sheer effort of style, and by indifferentism, strikes us from the point of view of art alone,

[1] To multiply instances is tedious; but notice in this connection the Hermaphroditic statue of S. Sebastian at Orvieto, near the western door. It is a fair work of Lo Scalza.

not reckoning religion or morality, as unsuccessful. Still, if it be childish on the one hand to deplore that the Christian earnestness of the earlier masters had failed, it would be even more ridiculous to complain that paganism had not been more entirely recovered. The double-mind of the Renaissance, the source of its weakness in art as in thought, could not be avoided, because humanity at this moment had to lose the mediæval sincerity of faith, and to assimilate the spirit of a bygone civilisation. This, for better or for worse, was the phase through which the intellect of modern Europe was obliged to pass; and those who have confidence in the destinies of the human race, will not spend their strength in moaning over such shortcomings as the periods of transition bring inevitably with them. The student of Italian history may indeed more reasonably be allowed to question whether the arts, if left to follow their own development unchecked, might not have recovered from the confusion of the Renaissance and have entered on a stage of nobler activity through earnest and unaffected study of nature. But the enslavement of the country, together with the counter-Reformation, suspended the Renaissance in mid-career; and what remains of Italian art is incomplete. Besides, it must be borne in mind that the confusion of opinions consequent upon the clash of the modern with the ancient world, left no body of generally accepted beliefs to express; nor has the time even yet arrived for a settlement and synthesis that shall be favourable to the activity of the figurative arts.

Sansovino himself was neither original nor powerful enough to elevate the mixed motives of Renaissance sculpture by any lofty idealisation. To do that remained for Michael Angelo. The greatness of Michael Angelo consists in this—that while literature was sinking into the frivolity of Academies and the filth of the Bernesque 'Capitoli,' while the barefaced villanies of Aretino won him credit, while sensual magnificence formed

the ideal of artists who were neither Greeks nor Christians, while Ariosto found no subject fitter for his genius than a glittering romance, he and he alone maintained the Dantesque dignity of the Italian intellect in his sculpture. Michael Angelo stands so far apart from other men, and is so gigantic a force for good and evil in the history of art, that to estimate his life and labour in relation to the Renaissance must form the subject of a separate chapter. For the present it is enough to observe that his immediate scholars, Raffaello da Montelupo, and Gian Angelo Montorsoli, caught little from their master but the mannerism of contorted form and agitated action. This mannerism, a blemish even in the strong work of Buonarroti, became ridiculous when adopted by men of feeble powers and passionless imagination. By straining the art of sculpture to its utmost limits, Michael Angelo expressed vehement emotions in marble; and the forced attitudes affected in his work had their value as significant of spiritual struggle. His imitators showed none of their master's sublime force, none of that *terribilità* which made him unapproachable in social intercourse and inimitable in art. They merely fancied that dignity and beauty were to be achieved by placing figures in difficult postures, exaggerated muscular anatomy, and twisting the limbs of their models upon sections of ellipses in uncomfortable attitudes, till the whole of their work was writhen into uncouth lines. Buonarroti himself was not responsible for these results. He wrought out his own ideal with the firmness of a genius that obeys the law of its own nature, doing always what it must. That the decadence of sculpture into truculent bravado was independent of his direct influence, is further proved by the inefficiency of his contemporaries.

Baccio Bandinelli and Bartolommeo Ammanati filled the squares of the Italian cities with statues of Hercules and Satyrs, Neptune and River-gods. We know not whether to

select the vulgarity, the feebleness, or the pretentiousness of these pseudo-classical colossi for condemnation. They have nothing Greek about them but their names, their nakedness, and their association with myths, the significance whereof was never really felt by the sculptors. Some of Bandinelli's designs, it is true, are vigorous; but they are mere drawings from undraped peasants, life studies depicting the human animal. His 'Hercules and Cacus,' while it deserves all the sarcasm hurled at it by Cellini, proves that Bandinelli could not rise above the wrestling bout of a porter and a coal-heaver. Nor would it be possible to invent a motive less in accordance with Greek taste than the conceit of Ammanati's fountain at Castello, where Hercules by squeezing the body of Antæus makes the drinking water of a city spout from a giant's mouth. Such pitiful misapplications of an art which is designed to elevate the commonplace of human form, and to render permanent the nobler qualities of physical existence, show how superficially and wrongly the antique spirit had been apprehended.

Some years before his death Ammanati expressed in public his regret that he had made so many giants and satyrs, feeling that, by exhibiting forms of lust, brutality, and animalism to the gaze of his fellow-countrymen, he had sinned against the higher law revealed by Christianity. For a Greek artist to have spoken thus would have been impossible. The Faun, the Titan, and the Satyr had a meaning for him, which he sought to set forth in accordance with the semi-religious, semi-poetical traditions of his race; and when he was at work upon a myth of nature-forces, he well knew that at the other end of the scale, separated by no spiritual barrier, but removed to an almost infinite distance of refinement, Zeus, Phœbus, and Pallas claimed his loftier artistic inspiration. Ammanati's confession, on the contrary, betrays that schism between the conscience of Christianity and the

lusts let loose by ill-assimilated sympathy with antique heathenism, which was a marked characteristic of the Renaissance. The coarser passions, held in check by ecclesiastical discipline, dared to emerge into the light of day under the supposed sanction of classical examples. What the Visconti and the Borgias practised in their secret chambers, the sculptors exposed in marble and the poets in verse. All alike, however, were mistaken in supposing that antique precedent sanctioned this efflorescence of immorality. No amount of Greek epigrams by Strato and Meleager, nor all the Hermaphrodites and Priapi of Rome, had power to annul the law of conduct established by the founders of Christianity, and ratified by the higher instincts of the Middle Ages. Nor again were artists justified before the bar of conscience in selecting the baser elements of Paganism for imitation, instead of aiming at Greek self-restraint and Roman strength of character. All this the men of the Renaissance felt when they listened to the voice within them. Their work, therefore, in so far as it pretended to be a reconstruction of the antique was false. The sensuality it shared in common with many Greek and Roman masterpieces, had ceased to be frank and in the true sense pagan. To shake off Christianity, and to revert with an untroubled conscience to the manners of a bygone age, was what they could not do.

The errors I have attempted to characterise did not, however, prevent the better and more careful works of sculpture, executed in illustration of classical mythology, from having a true value. The 'Perseus' of Cellini and some of Gian Bologna's statues belong to a class of æsthetic productions which show how much that is both original and excellent may be raised in the hotbed of culture.[1] They express a genuine moment of the Renaissance with vigour, and deserve

[1] This brief allusion to Cellini must suffice for the moment, as I intend to treat of him in a separate chapter.

to be ranked with the Latin poetry of Poliziano, Bembo, and Pontano. The worst that can be said of them is that their inspiration was factitious, and that their motives had been handled better in the age of Greek sincerity.

Gian Bologna, born at Douai, but a Florentine by education, devoted himself almost exclusively to mythological sculpture. That he was a greater sculptor than his immediate predecessors will be affirmed by all who have studied his bronze 'Mercury,' the 'Venus of Petraja,' and the 'Neptune' on the fountain of Bologna. Something of the genuine classic feeling had passed into his nature. The 'Mercury' is not a reminiscence of any antique statue. It gives in bronze a faithful and spirited reading of Virgil's lines, and is conceived with artistic purity not unworthy of a good Greek period. The 'Neptune' is something more than a muscular old man; and, in its place, it forms one of the most striking ornaments of Italy. It is worthy of remark that sculpture, in this stage, continued to be decorative. Fountains are among the most successful monuments of the late Renaissance. Even Montorsoli's fountain at Messina is in a high sense picturesquely beautiful.

Casting a glance backward over the foregoing sketch of Italian sculpture, it will be seen that three distinct stages were traversed in the evolution of this art. The first may be called architectural, the second pictorial, the third neo-pagan. Defined by their artistic purposes, the first idealises Christian motives; the second is naturalistic; the third attempts an idealisation inspired by revived paganism. As far as the Renaissance is concerned, all three are moments in its history; though it was only during the third that the influences of the classical revival made themselves overwhelmingly felt. Niccola Pisano in the first stage marked a fresh point of departure for his art by a return to Græco-Roman standards of the purest type then attainable, in

combination with the study of nature. Giovanni Pisano effected a fusion between his father's manner and the Gothic style. The Pisan sculpture was wholly Christian; nor did it attempt to free itself from the service of architecture. Giotto opened the second stage by introducing new motives, employed by him with paramount mastery in painting. Under his influence the sculptors inclined to picturesque effects, and the direction thus given to sculpture lasted through the fifteenth century. For the rest, the style of these masters was distinguished by a fresh and charming naturalism and by rapid growth in technical processes. While assimilating much of the classical spirit, they remained on the whole Christian; and herein they were confirmed by the subjects they were chiefly called upon to treat, in the decoration of altars, pulpits, church façades, and tombs. The revived interest in antique literature widened their sympathies and supplied their fancy with new material; but there is no imitative formalism in their work. Its beauty consists in a certain immature blending of motives chosen almost indiscriminately from Christian and pagan mythology, vitalised by the imagination of the artist, and presented with the originality of true creative instinct. During the third stage the results of prolonged and almost exclusive attention to the classics, on the part of the Italians as a people, make themselves manifest. Collections of antiquities and libraries had been formed in the fifteenth century; the literary energies of the nation were devoted to the interpretation of Greek and Latin texts, and the manners of society affected paganism. At the same time a worldly Church and a corrupt hierarchy had done their utmost to enfeeble the spirit of Christianity. That art should prove itself sensitive to this phase of intellectual and social life was natural. Religious subjects were now treated by the sculptors with superficial formalism and cynical indifference, while all their ingenuity

was bestowed upon providing pagan myths with new forms. How far they succeeded has been already made the matter of inquiry. The most serious condemnation of art in this third period is that it halted between two opinions, that it could not be sincere. But this double-mindedness, as I have tried to show, was necessary; and therefore to lament over it is weak. What the Renaissance achieved for the modern world was the liberation of the reason, the power of starting on a new career of progress. The false direction given to the art of sculpture at one moment of this intellectual revival may be deplored; and still more deplorable is the corresponding sensual debasement of the race who won for us the possibility of freedom. But the life of humanity is long and vigorous, and the philosopher of history knows well that the sum total of accomplishment at any time must be diminished by an unavoidable discount. The Renaissance, like a man of genius, had the defects of its qualities.

CHAPTER IV

PAINTING

Distribution of Artistic Gifts in Italy—Florence and Venice—Classification by Schools—Stages in the Evolution of Painting—Cimabue—The Rucellai Madonna—Giotto—His widespread Activity—The Scope of his Art—Vitality—Composition—Colour—Naturalism—Healthiness—Frescoes at Assisi and Padua—Legend of S. Francis—The Giotteschi—Pictures of the Last Judgment—Orcagna in the Strozzi Chapel—Ambrogio Lorenzetti at Pisa—Dogmatic Theology—Cappella degli Spagnuoli—Traini's 'Triumph of S. Thomas Aquinas'—Political Doctrine expressed in Fresco—Sala della Pace at Siena—Religious Art in Siena and Perugia—The Relation of the Giottesque Painters to the Renaissance.

It is the duty of the historian of painting to trace the beginnings of art in each of the Italian communities, to differentiate their local styles, and to explain their mutual connections. For the present generation this work is being done with all-sufficient thoroughness and accuracy.[1] The historian of culture, on the other hand, for whom the arts form one important branch of intellectual activity, may dispense with these detailed inquiries, and may endeavour to seize the more general outlines of the subject. He need not weigh in balances the claims of rival cities to priority, nor hamper his review of national progress by discussing the special merits of the several schools. Still there are certain broad facts about the distribution of artistic gifts in Italy which it is necessary to bear in mind. However much we

[1] In the *History of Painting in Italy*, by Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle.

may desire to treat of painting as a phase of national and not of merely local life, the fundamental difficulty of Italian history, its complexity and variety, owing to the subdivisions of the nation into divers states, must here as elsewhere be acknowledged. To deny that each of the Italian centres had its own strong personality in art—that painting, as practised in Genoa or Naples, differed from the painting of Ferrara or Urbino—would be to contradict a law that has been over and over again insisted upon already in these volumes.

The broad outlines of the subject can be briefly stated. Surveying the map of Italy, we find that we may eliminate from our consideration the north-western and the southern provinces. Not from Piedmont nor from Liguria, not from Rome nor from the extensive kingdom of Naples, does Italian painting take its origin, or at any period derive important contributions.[1] Lombardy, with the exception of Venice, is comparatively barren of originative elements.[2] To Tuscany, to Umbria, and to Venice, roughly speaking, are due the really creative forces of Italian painting; and these three districts were marked by strong peculiarities. In art, as in politics, Florence and Venice exhibit distinct types of character.[3] The Florentines developed fresco, and devoted their genius to the expression of thought by scientific design.

[1] Nothing is more astonishing than the sterility of Genoa and of Rome. Neither in sculpture nor in painting did these cities produce anything memorable, though Genoa was well placed for receiving the influences of Pisa, and had the command of the marble quarries of Carrara, while Rome was the resort of all the art-students of Italy. The very early eminence of Apulia in architecture and the plastic arts led to no results.

[2] Milan, it is true, produced a brilliant school of sculptors, and the Certosa of Pavia is a monument of her spontaneous artistic genius. But in painting, until the date of Lionardo's advent, she achieved little.

[3] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, pp. 182–188, for the constitutional characteristics of Florence and Venice; and Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, pp. 118–120, for the intellectual supremacy of Florence.

The Venetians perfected oil-painting, and set forth the glory of the world as it appeals to the imagination and the senses. The art of Florence may seem to some judges to savour over-much of intellectual dryness; the art of Venice, in the apprehension of another class of critics, offers something over-much of material richness. More allied to the Tuscan than to the Venetian spirit, the Umbrian masters produced a style of genuine originality. The cities of the Central Apennines owed their specific quality of religious fervour to the influences emanating from Assisi, the head-quarters of the *cultus* of S. Francis. This pietism, nowhere else so paramount, except for a short period in Siena, constitutes the individuality of Umbria.

With regard to the rest of Italy, the old custom of speaking about schools and places, instead of signalising great masters, has led to misconception, by making it appear that local circumstances were more important than the facts justify. We do not find elsewhere what we find in Tuscany, in Umbria, and in Venice—a definite quality, native to the district, shared through many generations by all its painters, and culminating in a few men of commanding genius. When, for instance, we speak of the School of Milan, what we mean is the continuation through Lionardo da Vinci and his pupils of the Florentine tradition, as modified by him and introduced into the Lombard capital. That a special style was developed by Luini, Ferrari, and other artists of the Milanese duchy, so that their manner differs essentially from that of Parma and Cremona, does not invalidate the importance of this fact about its origin. The name of Roman School, again, has been given to Raphael and Michael Angelo together with their pupils. The truth is that Rome, for one brief period, during the pontificates of Julius and Leo, was the focus of Italian intellect. Allured by the patronage of the Papal Curia, not only artists, but scholars

and men of letters, flocked from all the cities of Italy to Rome, where they found a nobler sphere for the exercise of their faculties than elsewhere. But Rome, while she lent her imperial quality of grandeur to the genius of her aliens, was in no sense originative. Rome produced no first-rate master from her own children, if we except Giulio Romano. The title of originality is due rather to Padua, the birthplace of Mantegna, or to Parma, the city of Correggio, whose works display independence of either Florentine or Venetian traditions. Yet these great masters were isolated, neither expressing in any definite form the character of their districts, nor founding a succession of local artists. Their influence was incontestably great, but widely diffused. Bologna and Ferrara, Brescia and Bergamo, Cremona and Verona, have excellent painters; and it is not difficult to show that in each of these cities art assumed specific characters. Yet the interest of the schools in these towns is due mainly to the varied influences brought to bear upon them from Venice, Umbria, and Milan. In other words they are affiliated, each according to its geographical position, to the chief originative centres.

What I have advanced in the foregoing paragraphs is not meant for a polemic against the time-honoured division of Italian painters into local schools, but for a justification of my own proposed method of treatment. Having undertaken to deal with painting as the paramount art-product of the Renaissance, it will be my object to point out the leading characteristics of æsthetic culture in Italy, rather than to dwell upon its specific differences. The Venetian painters I intend to reserve for a separate chapter, devoting this and the two next to the general history of the art as developed in Tuscany and propagated by Tuscan influences.[1] In pursuing

[1] A glance at the map shows to what a large extent the Italians owed the progress of their arts to Tuscany. Pisa, as we have already

this plan I shall endeavour to show how the successive stages in the evolution of Italian painting corresponded to similar stages in the history of the Renaissance. Beginning as the handmaid of the Church, and stimulated by the enthusiasm of the two great popular monastic orders, painting was at first devoted to embodying the thoughts of mediæval Christianity. In proportion as the painters fortified themselves by study of the natural world, their art became more secular. Mysticism gave way to realism. It was felt that much beside religious sentiment was worthy of expression. At the same time, about the year 1440, this process of secularisation was hastened by the influences of the classical revival, renewing an interest in the past life of humanity, and stirring a zeal for science. The painters, on the one hand, now aimed at accurate delineation of actual things: good perspective, correct drawing, sound portraiture, occupied their attention, to the exclusion of more purely spiritual motives. On the other hand they conceived an admiration for the fragments of the newly discovered antiques, and felt the plastic beauty of Hellenic legends. It is futile to attempt, as M. Rio has done, to prove that this abandonment of the religious sphere of earlier art was for painting a plain decline from good to bad, or to make the more or less of spiritual feeling in a painter's style the test of his degree of excellence;

seen, took the lead in sculpture. Florence, at a somewhat later period, revived painting, while Siena contemporaneously developed a style peculiar to herself. This Sienese style—thoroughly Tuscan, though different from that of Florence—exercised an important influence over the schools of Umbria, and gave a peculiar quality to Perugian painting. Through Piero della Francesca, a native of Borgo San Sepolcro, the Florentine tradition was extended to Umbria and the Roman States. Perugia might be even geographically claimed for Tuscany, inasmuch as the Tiber divides the old Etrurian territory from the Umbrians and the duchy of Spoleto. Lionardo was a Tuscan settled as an alien in Milan. Raphael, though a native of Urbino, derived his training from Florence, indirectly through his father and his master Perugino, more immediately from Fra Bartolommeo and Michael Angelo.

nor can we by any sophistries be brought to believe that the Popes of the fifteenth century were pastoral protectors of solely Christian arts. The truth is, that in the Church, in politics, and in society, the fifteenth century witnessed a sensible decrease of religious fervour, and a very considerable corruption of morality. Painting felt this change; and the secularisation, which was inevitable, passed onward into paganism. Yet the art itself cannot be said to have suffered, when on the threshold of the sixteenth century stand the greatest painters whom the world has known—neither Catholics nor Heathens, but, in their strength of full accomplished art and science, human. After Italy, in the course of that century, had been finally enslaved, then, and not till then, painting suffered from the general depression of the national genius. The great luminaries were extinguished one by one, till none were left but Michael Angelo in Rome, and Tintoret in Venice. The subsequent history of Italian painting is occupied with its revival under the influences of the counter-Reformation, when a new religious sentiment, emasculated and ecstatic, was expressed in company with crude naturalism and cruel sensualism by Bolognese and Neapolitan painters.

I need scarcely repeat the tale of Cimabue's picture, visited by Charles of Anjou, and borne in triumph through the streets with trumpeters, beneath a shower of garlands, to S. Maria Novella.[1] Yet this was the birthday festival of nothing less than what the world now values as Italian painting. In this public act of joy the people of Florence recognised and paid

[1] If Vasari is to be trusted, this visit of Charles of Anjou to Cimabue's studio took place in 1267; but neither the Malespini nor Villani mention it, and the old belief that the Borgo Allegri owed its name to the popular rejoicing at that time is now somewhat discredited. See Vasari, Le Monnier, 1846, vol. i. p. 225, note 4. Gino Capponi, in his *Storia della Repubblica di Firenze*, vol. i. p. 157, refuses however to reject the legend.

enthusiastic honour to the art arisen among them from the dead. If we rightly consider the matter, it is not a little wonderful that a whole community should thus have hailed the presence in their midst of a new spirit of power and beauty. It proves the widespread sensibility of the Florentines to things of beauty, and shows the sympathy which, emanating from the people, was destined to inspire and brace the artist for his work.[1]

In a dark transept of S. Maria Novella, raised by steps above the level of the church, still hangs this famous 'Madonna' of the Rucellai—not far, perhaps, from the spot where Boccaccio's youths and maidens met that Tuesday morning in the year of the great plague; nor far, again, from where the solitary woman, beautiful beyond belief, conversed with Machiavelli on the morning of the first of May in 1527.[2] We who can call to mind the scenes that picture has looked down upon—we who have studied the rise and decadence of painting throughout Italy from this beginning even to the last work of the latest Bolognese—may do well to visit it with reverence, and to ponder on the race of mighty masters whose lineage here takes its origin.

Cimabue did not free his style from what are called Byzantine or Romanesque mannerisms. To unpractised eyes his saints and angels, with their stiff draperies and angular attitudes, though they exhibit stateliness and majesty, belong to the same tribe as the grim mosaics and gaunt frescoes of his predecessors. It is only after careful comparison that we discover, in this picture of the Rucellai for example, a distinctly fresh endeavour to express emotion and to depict life. The outstretched arms of the infant Christ have been

[1] See Capponi, vol. i. pp. 59, 78, for a description of the gay and courteous living of the Florentines upon the end of the thirteenth century.

[2] See the *Descrizione della Peste di Firenze.*

copied from nature, not merely borrowed from tradition. The six kneeling angels display variety of attitude suited to several shades of devout affection and adoring service. The head of the Madonna, heavy as it is and conventional in type, still strives to represent maternal affection mingled with an almost melancholy reverence. Prolonging our study, we are led to ask whether the painter might not have painted more freely had he chosen—whether, in fact, he was not bound down to the antique mode of presentation consecrated by devout tradition. This question occurs with even greater force before the wall-paintings ascribed to Cimabue in the church of S. Francis at Assisi.

It remained for Giotto Bondone, born at Vespignano in 1276, just at the date of Niccola Pisano's death, to carry painting in his lifetime even further than the Pisan sculptor had advanced the sister art. Cimabue, so runs a legend luckily not yet discredited, found the child Giotto among the sheep-folds on the solemn Tuscan hill-side, drawing with boyish art the outline of a sheep upon a stone.[1] The master recognised his talent, and took him from his father's cottage to the Florentine *bottega*, much as young Haydn was taken by Reuter to S. Stephen's at Vienna. Gifted with a large and comprehensive intellect, capable of sustained labour, and devoted with the unaffected zeal of a good craftsman to his art, Giotto in the course of his long career filled Italy with work that taught succeeding centuries of painters. As we travel from Padua in the north, where his Arena Chapel sets forth the legend of Mary and the life of Christ in a series of incomparable frescoes, southward to Naples, where he adorned the convent of S. Chiara, we meet with Giotto in almost

[1] I wish I could here transcribe the most beautiful passage from Ruskin's *Giotto and his Works in Padua*, pp. 11, 12, describing the contrast between the landscape of Valdarno and the landscape of the hills of the Mugello district. I can only refer readers to the book, printed for the Arundel Society, 1854.

every city. The 'Passion of our Lord' and the 'Allegories of S. Francis' were painted by him at Assisi. S. Peter's at Rome still shows his mosaic of the 'Ship of the Church.' Florence raises his wonderful bell-tower, that lily among campanili, to the sky; and preserves two chapels of S. Croce, illuminated by him with paintings from the stories of S. Francis and S. John. In the chapel of the Podestà he drew the portraits of Dante, Brunetto Latini, and Charles of Valois. And these are but a tithe of his productions. Nothing, indeed, in the history of art is more remarkable than the fertility of this originative genius, no less industrious in labour than fruitful of results for men who followed him. The sound common sense, the genial temper, and the humour of the man, as we learn to know him in tales made current by Vasari and the novelists, help to explain how he achieved so much, with energy so untiring and with excellence so even.

It is no exaggeration to say that Giotto and his scholars, within the space of little more than half a century, painted out upon the walls of the churches and public palaces of Italy every great conception of the Middle Ages. And this they achieved without ascetic formalism, energetically, but always reverently, aiming at expressing life and dramatising Scripture history. The tale told about Giotto's first essay in drawing might be chosen as a parable: he was not found beneath a church roof tracing a mosaic, but on the open mountain, trying to draw the portrait of the living thing committed to his care.

What, therefore, Giotto gave to art was, before all things else, vitality. His Madonnas are no longer symbols of a certain phase of pious awe, but pictures of maternal love. The Bride of God suckles her divine infant with a smile, watches him playing with a bird, or stretches out her arms to take him when he turns crying from the hands of the

circumcising priest. By choosing incidents like these from real home-life, Giotto, through his painting, humanised the mysteries of faith, and brought them close to common feeling. Nor was the change less in his method than his motives. Before his day painting had been without composition, without charm of colour, without suggestion of movement or the play of living energy. He first knew how to distribute figures in the given space with perfect balance, and how to mass them together in animated groups agreeable to the eye. He caught varied and transient shades of emotion, and expressed them by the posture of the body and the play of feature. The hues of morning and of evening served him Of all painters he was most successful in preserving the clearness and the light of pure, well-tempered colours. His power of telling a story by gesture and action is unique in its peculiar simplicity. There are no ornaments or accessories in his pictures. The whole force of the artist has been concentrated on rendering the image of the life conceived by him. Relying on his knowledge of human nature, and seeking only to make his subject intelligible, no painter is more unaffectedly pathetic, more unconsciously majestic. While under the influence of his genius, we are sincerely glad that the requisite science for clever imitation of landscape and architectural backgrounds was not forthcoming in his age. Art had to go through a toilsome period of geometrical and anatomical pedantry, before it could venture, in the frescoes of Michael Angelo and Raphael, to return with greater wealth of knowledge on a higher level to the divine simplicity of its childhood in Giotto.

In the drawing of the figure Giotto was surpassed by many meaner artists of the fifteenth century. Nor had he that quality of genius which selects a high type of beauty, and is scrupulous to shun the commonplace. The faces of even his most sacred personages are often almost vulgar. In his choice

of models for saints and apostles we already trace the Florentine instinct for contemporary portraiture. Yet, though his knowledge of anatomy was defective, and his taste was realistic, Giotto solved the great problem of figurative art far better than more learned and fastidious painters. He never failed to make it manifest that what he meant to represent was living. Even to the non-existent he gave the semblance of reality. We cannot help believing in his angels leaning waist-deep from the blue sky, wringing their hands in agony above the Cross, pacing like deacons behind Christ when He washes the feet of His disciples, or sitting watchful and serene upon the empty sepulchre. He was, moreover, essentially a fresco-painter, working with rapid decision on a large scale, aiming at broad effects, and willing to sacrifice subtlety to clearness of expression. The health of his whole nature and his robust good sense are everywhere apparent in his solid, concrete, human work of art. There is no trace of mysticism, no ecstatic piety, nothing morbid or hysterical, in his imagination. Imbuing whatever he handled with the force and freshness of actual existence, Giotto approached the deep things of the Christian faith and the legend of S. Francis in the spirit of a man bent simply on realising the objects of his belief as facts. His allegories of 'Poverty,' 'Chastity,' and 'Obedience,' at Assisi, are as beautiful and powerfully felt as they are carefully constructed. Yet they conceal no abstruse spiritual meaning, but are plainly painted 'for the poor laity of love to read.' The artist poet who coloured the virginal form of Poverty, with the briars beneath her feet and the roses blooming round her forehead, proved by his well-known *canzone* that he was free from monastic Quixotism, and took a practical view of the value of worldly wealth.[1] His homely humour saved him from the exaltation and the childishness that formed the weakness of the Franciscan

[1] See Trucchi, *Poesie Italiane Inedite*, vol. ii. p. 8.

revival. By the same firm grasp upon reality he created more than mere abstractions in his *chiaroscuro* figures of the virtues and vices at Padua. Fortitude and Justice, Faith and Envy, are gifted by him with a real corporeal existence. They seem fit to play their parts with other concrete personalities upon the stage of this world's history. Giotto in truth possessed a share of that power which belonged to the Greek sculptors. He embodies myths in physical forms, adequate to their intellectual meaning. This was in part the secret of the influence he exercised over the sculptors of the second period;[1] and had the conditions of the age been favourable to such development, some of the allegorical types created by him might have passed into the Pantheon of popular worship as deities incarnate.

The birth of Italian painting is closely connected with the religious life of the Italians. The building of the church of S. Francis at Assisi gave it the first great impulse; and to the piety aroused by S. Francis throughout Italy, but mostly in the valleys of the Apennines, it owed its animating spirit in the fourteenth century. The church of Assisi is double. One structure of nave, and choir, and transept, is imposed upon another; and the walls of both, from floor to coping-stone, are covered with fresco—painted pictures taking here the place occupied by mosaic in such churches as the cathedral of Monreale, or by coloured glass in the northern cathedrals of the pointed style. Many of these frescoes date from years before the birth of Giotto. Giunta the Pisan, Gaddo Gaddi, and Cimabue, are supposed to have worked there, painfully continuing or feebly struggling to throw off the decadent traditions of a dying art. In their school Giotto laboured, and modern painting arose with the movement of new life beneath his brush. Here, pondering in his youth upon the story of Christ's suffering, and in his later manhood on the

[1] See above, pp. 87–89.

virtues of S. Francis and his vow, he learned the secret of giving the semblance of flesh and blood reality to Christian thought. His achievement was nothing less than this. The Creation, the Fall, the Redemption of the World, the moral discipline of man, the Judgment, and the final state of bliss or misery—all these he quickened into beautiful and breathing forms. Those were noble days, when the painter had literally acres of walls given him to cover; when the whole belief of Christendom, grasped by his own faith, and firmly rooted in the faith of the people round him, as yet unimpaired by alien emanations from the world of classic culture, had to be set forth for the first time in art. His work was then a Bible, a compendium of grave divinity and human history, a book embracing all things needful for the spiritual and the civil life of man. He spoke to men who could not read, for whom there were no printed pages, but whose heart received his teaching through the eye. Thus painting was not then what it is now, a decoration of existence, but a potent and efficient agent in the education of the race. Such opportunities do not occur twice in the same age. Once in Greece for the pagan world; once in Italy for the modern world;—that must suffice for the education of the human race.

Like Niccola Pisano, Giotto not only founded a school in his native city, but spread his manner far and wide over Italy, so that the first period of the history of painting is the Giottesque. The Gaddi of Florence, Giottino, Puccio Capanna, the Lorenzetti of Siena, Spinello of Arezzo, Andrea Orcagna, Domenico Veneziano, and the lesser artists of the Pisan Campo Santo, were either formed or influenced by him. To give an account of the frescoes of these painters would be to describe how the religious, social, and philosophical conceptions of the fourteenth century found complete expression in form and colour. By means of allegory and pictured scene they drew the portrait of the Middle Age in Italy, performing jointly and

in combination with the followers of Niccola Pisano what Dante had done singly by his poetry.

It has often been remarked that the drama of the life beyond this world—its prologue in the courts of death, the tragedy of judgment, and the final state of bliss or misery prepared for souls—preoccupied the mind of the Italians at the close of the Middle Ages. Every city had its pictorial representation of the 'Dies Iræ;' and within this framework the artist was free to set forth his philosophy of human nature, adding such touches of satire or admonition as suited his own temper or the circumstances of the place for which he worked. Dante's poem has immortalised this moment of Italian consciousness, when the belief in another world was used to intensify the emotions of this life—when the inscrutable darkness toward which men travel became for them a black and polished mirror reflecting with terrible luminousness the events of the present and the past. So familiar had the Italians become with the theme of death artistically treated, that they did not shrink from acted pageants of the tragedy of Hell. Giovanni Villani tells us that in 1304 the companies and clubs of pleasure, formed for making festival throughout the town of Florence on the 1st of May, contended with each other for the prize of novelty and rarity in sports provided for the people. Among the rest, the Borgo S. Friano had it cried about the streets, that whoso wished for news from the other world, should find himself on Mayday on the bridge Carraja or the neighbouring banks of Arno. And in Arno they contrived stages upon boats and various small craft, and made the semblance and figure of Hell there with flames and other pains and torments, with men dressed as demons horrible to see; and others had the shape of naked souls; and these they gave unto those divers tortures with exceeding great crying and groaning and confusion, the which seemed hateful and appalling unto eyes and ears. The novelty of the sport drew many citizens,

and the bridge Carraja, then of wood, was so crowded that it brake in several places and fell with the folk upon it, whereby were many killed and drowned, and many were disabled; and as the crier had proclaimed, so now in death went much folk to learn news of the other world.'

Such being the temper of the people, we find that some of the greatest works of art in this age were paintings of Death and Hell, Heaven and Judgment. Orcagna, in the Strozzi Chapel of S. Maria Novella, set forth these scenes with a wonderful blending of beauty and grotesque invention. In the treatment of the Inferno he strove to delineate the whole geography of Dante's first *cantica*, tracing the successive circles and introducing the various episodes commemorated by the poet. Interesting as this work may be for the illustration of the 'Divine Comedy' as understood by Dante's immediate successors, we turn from it with a sense of relief to admire the saints and angels ranged in goodly row, 'each burning upward to his point of bliss,' whereby the painter has depicted Paradise. Early Italian art has nothing more truly beautiful to offer than the white-robed Madonna kneeling at the judgment seat of Christ.[1]

[1] The wonderful beauty of Orcagna's faces, profile after profile laid together like lilies in a garden border, can only be discovered after long study. It has been my good fortune to examine, through the kindness of Mrs. Higford Burr, of Aldermaston, a large series of tracings, taken chiefly by the Right Hon. A. H. Layard, from the frescoes of Giottesque and other early masters, which, by the selection of simple form in outline, demonstrate not only the grand composition of these religious paintings, but also the incomparable loveliness of their types. How great the *Trecentisti* were as draughtsmen, how imaginative was the beauty of their conception, can be best appreciated by thus artificially separating their design from their colouring. The semblance of archaism disappears, and leaves a vision of pure beauty, delicate and spiritual. The collection to which I have alluded was made some years ago, when access to the wall-paintings of Italy for the purpose of tracing was still possible. It includes nearly the whole of Lorenzetti's work in the Sala della Pace,

It will be felt by every genuine student of art that if Orcagna painted these frescoes in S. Maria Novella, whereof there is no doubt, he could not have executed the wall-paintings in the Campo Santo at Pisa attributed to him by Vasari. To what artists or artist we owe those three grave and awful panels, may still be regarded an open question.[1] At the end of the southern wall of the cemetery, exposed to a cold and equal north light from the cloister windows, these great compositions, after the lapse of five centuries, bring us face to face with the most earnest thoughts of mediæval Christianity. Their main purpose seems to be to illustrate the advantage of the ascetic over the secular mode of life, and to school men into living with the fear of death before their eyes. The first displays the solitary vigils, self-imposed penances, cruel temptations, firm endurance, and beatific visions of the anchorites in the Thebaid. The second is devoted to the triumph of Death over the pomp, strength, wealth, and beauty of the world. The third reveals a grimly realistic and yet awfully imaginative vision of judgment, such as it has rarely been granted to a painter to conceive. Thus to the awakening soul of the Italians, on the threshold of the modern era, with the sonnets of Petrarch and the stories of Boccaccio sounding in their memories, this terrible master presented the three saddest phantoms of the Middle Ages—the spectre of death omnipotent, the solitude of the desert as the only refuge from a sinful and doomed world, the dread of

much of Giotto, the Gozzoli frescoes at S. Gemignano, frescoes of the Veronese masters and of the Paduan Baptistery, a great deal of Piero della Francesca, Mantegna, Luini, Gaudenzio Ferrari, Pinturicchio, Masolino, &c. The earliest masters of Arezzo, Pisa, Siena, Urbino are copiously illustrated, while few burghs or hamlets of the Tuscan and Umbrian districts have been left unvisited.

[1] See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. i. pp. 445–451, for a discussion of the question. They incline to the authorship of Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti. But the last Florentine edition of Vasari renders this opinion doubtful.

Divine justice inexorable and inevitable. In those piles of the promiscuous and abandoned dead, those fiends and angels poised in mid-air struggling for souls, those blind and mutilated beggars vainly besieging Death with prayers and imprecations for deliverance, while she descends in her robe of woven wire to mow down with her scythe the knights and ladies in their garden of delight; again in those horses snuffing at the open graves, those countesses and princes face to face with skeletons, those serpents coiling round the flesh of what was once fair youth or maid, those multitudes of guilty men and women trembling beneath the trump of the archangel—tearing their cheeks, their hair, their breasts in agony, because they see Hell through the prison-bars, and hear the raging of its fiends, and feel the clasp upon their wrists and ankles of clawed hairy demon hands; in all this terrific amalgamation of sinister and tragic ideas, vividly presented, full of coarse dramatic power, and intensified by faith in their material reality, the Lorenzetti brethren, if theirs be indeed the hands that painted here, summed up the nightmares of the Middle Age and bequeathed an ever-memorable picture of its desolate preoccupations to the rising world. They have called to their aid poetry, and history, and legend. Boccaccio supplies them with the garden scene of youths and damsels dancing among roses, while the plague is at their gates, and death is in the air above. From Petrarch they have borrowed the form and mystic robe of Death herself.[1] Uguccione della Faggiuola has sat for the portrait of the Captain who must quail before the terrors of the tomb, and Castruccio Castracane is the strong man cut off in the blossom of his age. The prisons of the Visconti have dis-

[1] Ed una donna involta in veste negra,
Con un furor qual io non so se mai
Al tempo de' giganti fosse a Flegra.
Trionfo della Morte, cap. i. 81.

gorged their victims, cast adrift with maiming that makes life unendurable but does not hasten death.[1] The lazar houses and the charnels have been ransacked for forms of grisly decay. Thus the whole work is not merely 'an hieroglyphical and shadowed lesson' of ascetic philosophy; it is also a realisation of mediæval life in its cruellest intensity and most uncompromising truth. For mere beauty these painters had but little regard.[2] Their distribution of the subjects chosen for treatment on each panel shows, indeed, a keen sense for the value of dramatic contrast and a masterly power of varying while combining the composition. Their chief aim, however, is to produce the utmost realism of effect, to translate the poignancy of passion, the dread certainty of doom, into forms of unmistakable fidelity. Therefore they do not shrink from prosaic and revolting details. The knight who has to hold his nose above the open grave, the lady who presses her cheek against her hand with a spasm of distress, the horse who pricks his ears and snorts with open nostrils, the grooms who start aside like savage creatures, all suggest the loathsomeness of death, its physical repulsiveness. In the 'Last Judgment' the same kind of dramatic force is used to heighten a sublime conception. The crouching attitude and the shrouded face of the Archangel Raphael, whose eyes alone are visible above the hand that he has thrust forth from his cloak to hide the grief he feels, prove more emphatically than any less realistic motive could have done,

[1] On a scroll above these wretches is written this legend:—

Dacchè prosperitade ci ha lasciati,
O morte, medicina d' ogni pena,
Deh vieni a darne omai l' ultima cena.

[2] This might be used as an argument against the Lorenzetti hypothesis; for their work at Siena is eminently beautiful.

how terrible, even for the cherubic beings to whose guardianship the human race has been assigned, will be the trumpet of the wrath of God.[1] Studying these frescoes, we cannot but reflect what nerves, what brains, what hearts encased in triple brass the men who thought and felt thus must have possessed. They make us comprehend not merely the stern and savage temper of the Middle Ages, but the intense and fiery ebullition of the Renaissance, into which, as by a sudden liberation, so much imprisoned pent-up force was driven.

A different but scarcely less important phase of mediæval thought is imaged in the frescoes of the Cappella degli Spagnuoli in S. Maria Novella.[2] Dogmatic theology is here in the ascendant. While S. Francis bequeathed a legend of singular suavity and beauty, overflowing with the milk of charity and mildness, to the Church, S. Dominic assumed the attitude

[1] The attitude and the eyes of this archangel have an imaginative potency beyond that of any other motive used by any painter to suggest the terror of the *Dies Iræ*. Simplicity and truth of vision in the artist have here touched the very summit of intense dramatic presentation.

[2] The 'Triumph of S. Thomas Aquinas,' in this cloister-chapel, has long been declared the work of Taddeo Gaddi. 'The Triumph of the Church Militant,' and the 'Consecration of S. Dominic,' used to be ascribed, on the faith of Vasari, to Simone Martini of Siena. Independently of its main subject, this vast wall-painting is specially interesting on account of its portraits. The work has a decidedly Sienese character; but recent critics are inclined to assign it to a certain Andrea, of Florence. See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. ii. p. 89. The same critics doubt the hand of Taddeo Gaddi in the 'Triumph of S. Thomas,' vol. i. p. 374, and remark that 'these productions of the art of the fourteenth century are, indeed, second-class works, executed by pupils of the Sienese and Florentine school, and unworthy of the high praise which has ever been given to them.' Whatever may be ultimately thought about the question of their authorship and pictorial merit, their interest to the student of Italian painting in relation to mediæval thought will always remain indisputable. Few buildings in the length and breadth of Italy possess such claims on our attention as the Cappella degli Spagnuoli.

of the saint militant and orthodox. Dante's words about him—

L'amoroso drudo[1]
Della fede Cristiana, il santo atleta,
Benigno a' suoi, ed a' nemici crudo,

omit nothing that is needed to characterise the impression produced upon the Christian world by this remorseless foe of heresy, this champion of the faith who dealt in butcheries and burnings. S. Francis taught love; S. Dominic taught wrath: and both, perhaps, were needed for the safety of the mediæval Church—the one by resuscitating the spirit of the Gospels, the other by resisting the intrusion of alien ideals ere the time for their triumph had arrived. What the painters of these frescoes undertook to delineate for the Dominicans of Florence, was the fabric of society sustained and held together by the action of inquisitors and doctors issued from their order. The Pope with his Cardinals, the Emperor with his Council, represent the two chief forces of Christendom, as conceived by the mediæval jurists and the school of Dante. Seated on thrones, they are ready to rise in defence of Holy Church, symbolised by a picture of S. Maria del Fiore. At their feet the black and white hounds of the Dominican order—*Domini canes*, according to the monkish pun—are hunting heretical wolves. Opposite this painting is the apotheosis of S. Thomas Aquinas. Beneath the footstool of this 'dumb ox of Sicily,' as he was called, grovel the heresiarchs—Arius, Sabellius, Averroes. At again a lower level, as though supporting the saint on either hand, are ranged seven sacred and seven profane sciences, each with its chief representative. Thus Rhetoric and Cicero, Civil Law and Justinian, Speculative Theology and the Areopagite, Practical Theology and Peter Lombard, Geometry and Euclid, Arithmetic and Abraham, are grouped together. It will be

[1] The amorous fere of the Christian faith, the holy athlete, gentle to his own, and to his foes cruel.

seen that the whole learning of the Middle Age—its philosophy as well as its divinity—is here combined as in a figured abstract, for the wise to comment on and for the simple to peruse. None can avoid drawing the lesson that knowledge exists for the service of the Church, and that the Church, while she instructs society, will claim complete obedience to her decrees. The *ipse dixit* of the Dominican author of the 'Summa' is law.

Such frescoes, by no means uncommon in Dominican cloisters, still retain great interest for the student of scholastic thought. In the church of S. Maria Sopra Minerva at Rome, where Galileo was afterwards compelled to sign his famous retractation, Filippino Lippi painted another triumph of S. Thomas, conceived in the spirit of Taddeo Gaddi's, but expressed with the freedom of the middle Renaissance. Nor should we neglect to notice the remarkable picture by Traini in S. Caterina at Pisa. Here the doctor of Aquino is represented in an aureole surrounded by a golden sphere or disc, on the edge of which are placed the four evangelists, together with Moses and S. Paul.[1] At his side, within the burnished sphere, Plato and Aristotle stand upright, holding the 'Timæus' and the 'Ethics' in their hands. Christ in glory is above the group, emitting from His mouth three rays upon the head of S. Thomas. Single rays descend in like manner upon the evangelists and Moses and S. Paul. They, like Plato and Aristotle, hold open books; and rays from these eight volumes converge upon the head of the angelical doctor, who becomes the focus, as it were, of all the beams sent forth from Christ and from the classic teachers, whether directly effused

[1] Everything outside this golden region is studded with stars to signify an *ἐπουράνιος τόπος*, or heaven of heavens. S. Thomas and the Greeks are inside the golden sphere of science, and below on earth are the heresiarchs and faithful. Rosini gives a faithful outline of this picture in his Atlas of Illustrations.

or transmitted through the writers of the Bible. S. Thomas lastly holds a book open in his hand, and carries others on his lap; while lines of light are shed from these upon two bands of the faithful, chiefly Dominican monks, arranged on each side of his footstool. Averroes lies prostrate beneath his feet with his book face downwards, lightning-smitten by a shaft from the leaves of the volume in the saint's hand, whereon is written: *veritatem meditabitur guttur meum et labia mea detestabuntur impium.*[1]

This picture, afterwards repeated by Benozzo Gozzoli with some change in the persons,[2] has been minutely described, because it is important to bear in mind the measure of inspiration conceded by the mediæval Church to the fathers of Greek philosophy, and her utter detestation of the peripatetic traditions transmitted through the Arabic by Averroes. Averroes, though Dante placed him with the great souls of pagan civilisation in the first circle of Inferno,[3] was regarded as the protagonist of infidelity. The myth of incredulity that gathered round his memory and made him hated in the Middle Ages, has been traced with exquisite delicacy by Renan,[4] who shows that his name became a rallying point for freethinkers. Scholars like Petrarch were eager to confute his sect, and artists used him as a symbol of materialistic disbelief. Thus we meet with Averroes among the lost souls in the Pisan Campo Santo, distinguished as usual by his turban and long beard. On the other hand, the frank acceptance of pagan philosophy, insofar as it could be accommodated to the doctrine of the Church, finds full expression in the art of this early period. On the walls of the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena were painted the figures of

[1] 'For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.'—Prov. viii. 7.

[2] Gozzoli's picture is now in the Louvre. I think Guillaume de Saint Amour takes the place of Averroes.

[3] *Inf.* iv. 144.

[4] *Averroès et l'Averroïsme*, pp. 286–316.

Curius Dentatus and Cato,[1] while the pavement of the Duomo showed Hermes Trismegistus instructing both a pagan and a Christian, and Socrates ascending the steep hill of virtue. Perugino, some years later, decorated the Sala del Cambio at Perugia with the heroes, philosophers, and worthies of the ancient world. We are thus led by a gradual progress up to the final achievement of Raphael in the Vatican. Separating the antique from the Christian tradition, but placing them upon an equality in his art, Raphael made the 'School of Athens' an epitome of Greek and Roman wisdom, while in the 'Dispute of the Sacrament' he symbolised the Church in heaven and Church on earth.

Another class of ideas, no less illustrative of mediævalism, can be studied in the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena. There, on the walls of the Sala della Pace or de' Nove, may be seen the frescoes whereby Ambrogio Lorenzetti expressed theories of society and government peculiar to his age.[2] The panels are three in number. In the first the painter has delineated the Commune of Siena by an imperial male figure in the prime of life, throned on a judgment-seat, holding a sceptre in his right hand and a medallion of Justice in his left.[3] He wears no coronet, but a burgher's cap; and beneath his footstool are the Roman twins, suckled by the she-wolf.[4] Above his head in the air

[1] In the chapel. They are the work of Taddeo di Bartolo, and bear this inscription: 'Specchiatevi in costoro, voi che reggete.' The mediæval painters of Italy learned lessons of civility and government as willingly from classical tradition, as they deduced the lessons of piety and godly living from the Bible. Herein they were akin to Dante, who chose Virgil for the symbol of the human understanding and Beatrice for the symbol of divine wisdom, revealed to man in Theology.

[2] He began his work in 1337.

[3] A similar mode of symbolising the Commune is chosen in the bas-reliefs of Archbishop Tarlati's tomb at Arezzo, where the discord of the city is represented by an old man of gigantic stature, throned and maltreated by the burghers, who are tearing out his hair by handfuls. Over this figure is written 'Il Comune Pelato.'

[4] These were adopted as the ensign of Siena, in the Middle Ages.

float Faith, Charity, and Hope—the Christian virtues; while Justice, Temperance, Magnanimity, Prudence, Fortitude, and Peace, six women, crowned, and with appropriate emblems, are enthroned beside him. The majestic giant of the Commune towers above them all in bulk and stature, as though to indicate the people's sovereignty. The virtues are his assessors and inspirers—he is King. Beneath the daïs occupied by these supreme personages, are ranged on either hand mailed and visored cavaliers, mounted on chargers, the guardians of the State. All the citizens in their degrees advance toward the throne, carrying between them, pair by pair, a rope received from the hands of Concord; while some who have transgressed her laws, are being brought with bound hands to the judgment-seat. Concord herself, being less the virtue of the government than of the governed, is seated on a line with the burghers in a place apart beneath the throne of Civil Justice, who is allegorised as the dispenser of rewards and punishments, as well as controller of the armed force and the purse of the community. The whole of this elaborate allegory suffers by the language of description. Those who have seen it, and who are familiar with Sienese chronicles, feel that, artistically laboured as the painter's work may be, every figure had a passionate and intense meaning for him.[1] His picture is the epitome of government conducted by a sovereign people. Nor can we fail to be struck with the beauty of some details. The pale earnest faces of the horsemen are eminently chivalrous, with knightly

[1] In the year 1336, just before Ambrogio began to paint, the Sienese Republic had concluded a league with Florence for the maintenance of the Guelf party. The Monte de' Nove still ruled the city with patriotic spirit and equity, and had not yet become a forceful oligarchy. The power of the Visconti was still in its cradle; the great plague had not devastated Tuscany. As early as 1355 the whole of the fair order represented by Ambrogio was shaken to the foundation, and Siena deserved the words applied to it by De Commines. See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 162, note 2.

honour written on their calm and fearless features. Peace, reclining at ease upon her pillow, is a lovely woman in loose raiment, her hair wreathed with blossoms, in her hand an olive branch, her feet reposing upon casque and shield. She is like a painted statue, making us wonder whether the artist had not copied her from the 'Aphrodite' of Lysippus, ere the Sienese destroyed this statue in their dread of paganism.[1]

In the other two panels of this hall Ambrogio Lorenzetti painted the contrast of good and bad government, harmony and discord. A city full of brawls and bloodshed is set in opposition to one where the dance and viol do not cease. Merchants are plundered as they issue from the gates on one side; on the other, trains of sumpter mules are securely winding along mountain paths. Tyranny, with all the vices for his council and with Terror for prime minister, presides over the ill-governed town. The burghers of the happy commune follow trade or pleasure, as they list; a beautiful winged genius, inscribed 'Securitas,' floats above their citadel. It should be added that in both these pictures the architecture is the same; for the painter has designed to teach how different may be the state of one and the same city according to its form of government. Such then were the vivid images whereby Ambrogio Lorenzetti expressed the mediæval curse of discord, and the ideal of a righteous rule. It is only necessary to read the 'Diario Sanese' of Allegretto Allegretti in order to see that he drew no fancy picture. The torchlight procession of burghers swearing amity by couples in the cathedral there described, receives exact pictorial illustration in the fresco of the Sala della Pace.[2] Siena, by her bloody

[1] Rio, perversely bent on stigmatising whatever in Italian art savours of the Renaissance, depreciates this lovely form of Peace. *L'Art Chrétien*, vol. i. p. 57.

[2] See Muratori, vol. xxiii., or the passage translated by me in Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 480.

factions and her passionate peacemakings, expressed in daily action what the painter had depicted on her palace walls.

The method of treatment adopted for these chapters has obliged me to give priority to Florence, and to speak of the two Lorenzetti, Pietro in the Pisan Campo Santo and Ambrogio in the Sala della Pace at Siena, as though they were followers of Giotto; so true is it that the main currents of Tuscan art were governed by Florentine influences, and that Giotto's genius made itself felt in all the work of his immediate successors. It must, however, be observed that painting had an independent origin among the Sienese, and that Guido da Siena may claim to rank even earlier than Cimabue.[1] In the year 1260, just before engaging in their duel with Florence, the Sienese dedicated their city to the Virgin; and the victory of Montaperti, following immediately upon this vow, gave a marked impulse to their piety.[2] The early masters of Siena devoted themselves to religious paintings, especially to pictures of Madonna suited for chapels and oratories. We find upon these mystic panels an ecstasy of adoration and a depth of fervour which are alien to the more sober spirit of Florence, combined with an almost infantine delight in pure bright colours, and in the decorative details of the miniaturist.

The first great painter among the Sienese was Duccio di Buoninsegna.[3] The completion of his masterpiece—a picture of the Majesty of the Virgin, executed for the high altar of the Duomo—marked an epoch in the history of Siena. Nearly two years had been spent upon it; the painter receiving sixteen soldi a day from the Commune, together with his

[1] His 'Madonna' in S. Domenico is dated 1221. For a full discussion of Guido da Siena's date, see Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. i. pp. 180–185.

[2] On their coins the Sienese struck this legend: 'Sena vetus Civitas Virginis.' It will be remembered how the Florentines, two centuries and a half later, dedicated their city to Christ as king.

[3] Date of birth unknown; date of death, about 1320.

materials, in exchange for his whole time and skill and labour. At last, on June 9, 1310, it was carried from Duccio's workshop to its place in the cathedral. A procession was formed by the clergy, with the archbishop at their head, followed by the magistrates of the Commune, and the chief men of the Monte de' Nove. These great folk crowded round their Lady; after came a multitude of burghers bearing tapers; while the rear was brought up by women and children. The bells rang and trumpets blew as this new image of the Sovereign Mistress of Siena was borne along the summer-smiling streets of her metropolis to take its throne in her high temple. Duccio's altar-piece presented on one face to the spectator a Virgin seated with the infant Christ upon her lap, and receiving the homage of the patron saints of Siena. On the other, he depicted the principal scenes of the Gospel story and the Passion of our Lord in twenty-eight compartments. What gives peculiar value to this elaborate work of Sienese art is, that in it Duccio managed to combine the tradition of an early hieratic style of painting with all the charm of brilliant colouring and with dramatic force of presentation only rivalled at that time by Giotto. Independently of Giotto, he performed at a stroke what Cimabue and his pupil had achieved for the Florentines, and bequeathed to the succeeding painters of Siena a tradition of art beyond which they rarely passed.

Far more than their neighbours at Florence, the Sienese remained fettered by the technical methods and the pietistic formulæ of the earliest religious painting. To make their conventional representations of Madonna's love and woe and glory burn with all the passion of a fervent spirit, and to testify their worship by the oblation of rich gifts in colouring and gilding massed around her, was their earnest aim. It followed that, when they attempted subjects on a really large scale, the faults of the miniaturist clung about them. I

need hardly say that Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti form notable exceptions to this general statement. It may be applied, however, with some truth to Simone Martini, the painter, who during his lifetime enjoyed a celebrity only second to that of Giotto.[1] Like Giotto, Simone exercised his art in many parts of Italy. Siena, Pisa, Assisi, Orvieto, Naples, and Avignon can still boast of wall and easel pictures from his hand; and though it has been suggested that he took no part in the decoration of the Cappella degli Spagnuoli, the impress of his manner remains at Florence in those noble frescoes of the 'Church Militant' and the 'Consecration of S. Dominic.'[2] Simone's first undisputed works are to be seen at Siena and at Assisi, where we learn what he could do as a *frescante* in competition with the ablest Florentines. In the Palazzo Pubblico of his native city he painted a vast picture of the Virgin enthroned beneath a canopy and surrounded by saints;[3] while at Assisi he put forth his whole power in portraying the legend of S. Martin. In all his paintings we trace the skill of an exquisite and patient craftsman, elaborately careful to finish his work with the utmost refinement, sensitive to feminine beauty, full of

[1] He is better known as Simone Memmi, a name given to him by a mistake of Vasari's. He was born in 1283 at Siena. He died in 1344 at Avignon. Petrarch mentions his portrait of Madonna Laura, in the 49th and 50th sonnets of the 'Rime in Vita di Madonna Laura.' In another place he uses these words about Simone: 'Duos ego novi pictores egregios, nec formosos, Jottum Florentinum civem, cujus inter modernos fama ingens est, et Simonem Senensem.'—*Epist. Fam.* lib. v. 17, p. 653. Petrarch proceeds to mention that he has also known sculptors, and asserts their inferiority to painters in modern times.

[2] See above, p. 149. Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle reject, not without reason, as it seems to me, the tradition that Simone painted the frescoes of S. Ranieri in the Campo Santo at Pisa. See vol. ii. p. 83. What remains of his work at Pisa is an altar-piece in S. Caterina.

[3] To Simone is also attributed the interesting portrait of Guidoriccio Fogliani de' Ricci, on horseback, in the Sala del Consiglio. This, however, has been so much repainted as to have lost its character.

delicate inventiveness, and gifted with a rare feeling for grace. These excellent qualities tend, however, towards affectation and over-softness; nor are they fortified by such vigour of conception or such majesty in composition as belong to the greatest *trecentisti*. The Lorenzetti alone soared high above the Sienese mannerism into a region of masculine imaginative art. We feel Simone's charm mostly in single heads and detached figures, some of which at Assisi have incomparable sweetness. 'Molles Senæ,' the delicate and femininely variable, fond of all things brilliant, and unstable through defect of sternness, was the fit mother of this ingenious and delightful master.

After the days of Duccio and Simone Martini, of Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti, were over, there remained but little for the Sienese to do in painting. Taddeo di Bartolo continued the tradition of Duccio, as the later Giottesques continued that of Giotto. His most remarkable wall-painting is a fresco of the Apostles visiting the Virgin, the motive of which is marked by great originality.[1] Our Lady is seated in an open loggia with a company of holy men and women round her. Descending from the sky and floating through the arches are three of the Apostles, while one who has just alighted from his aërial transit kneels and folds his hands in adoration. Seldom have the longing and the peace of loving worship been more poetically expressed than here. The seated, kneeling, standing, and flying figures are admirably grouped together; their draperies are dignified and massive; and the architectural accessories help the composition by dividing it into three balanced sections.

Such power of depicting movement was rare in the fourteenth century. To find its analogue, we must betake ourselves to the frescoes of Spinello Aretino, a master more decidedly Giottesque than his contemporary Taddeo di

[1] In S. Francesco at Pisa.

Bartolo.[1] A Gabriel, rushing down from heaven to salute Madonna, with all the whirr of arch-angelic pinions and the glory of Paradise around him, is a fine specimen of Spinello's vehemence. The same quality, more tempered, is noticeable in his frescoes of the legend of S. Ephesus at Pisa.[2] Few faces in the paintings of any period are more fascinating than the profiles under steel-blue battle-caps of that godlike pair—the knightly saint and the Archangel Michael—breaking by the irresistible force of their onset and their calm youthful beauty through the mailed ranks of the Sardinian pagans. Spinello was essentially a warlike painter; among the best of his compositions may be named the series of pictures from the history of the Venetian campaign against Frederick Barbarossa.[3] It is a pity that the war of liberation carried on by the Lombard communes with the Empire should have left but little trace on Italian art; and therefore these paintings of Spinello, in addition to their intrinsic merit, have rare historical interest. Delighting in the gleam of armour and the shock of speared warriors, Spinello communicated something of this fiery spirit even to his saints. The monks of Samminiato near Florence employed him in 1388 to paint their newly-finished sacristy with the legend of S. Benedict. In the execution of this task Spinello displayed his usual grandeur and vigour, treating the grey-robed brethren of Monte Cassino like veritable champions of a militant Church. When he died in 1410, it might have been truly said that the flame of the torch kindled by Giotto was at last extinguished.

The student of history cannot but notice with surprise that a city famed like Siena for its vanity, its factious quarrels,

[1] Spinello degli Spinelli was born of a Ghibelline family, exiled from Florence, who settled at Arezzo, about 1308. He died at Arezzo in 1410, aged 92, according to some computations.

[2] South wall of the Campo Santo, on the left-hand of the entrance.

[3] In the Sala di Balia of the public palace at Siena.

and its delicate living, should have produced an almost passionately ardent art of piety.[1] The same reflections are suggested at Perugia, torn by the savage feuds of the Oddi and Baglioni, at warfare with Assisi, reduced to exhaustion by the discords of jealous parties, yet memorable in the history of painting as the head-quarters of the pietistic Umbrian school. The contradiction is, however, in both cases more apparent than real. The people both of Siena and Perugia were highly impressible and emotional, quick to obey the promptings of their passion, whether it took the form of hatred or of love, of spiritual fervour or of carnal violence. Yielding at one moment to the preachings of S. Bernardino, at another to the persuasions of Grifonetto degli Baglioni, the Perugians won the character of being fiends or angels according to the temper of their leaders; while Siena might boast with equal right of having given birth to S. Catherine and nurtured Beccadelli. The religious feeling was a passion with them on a par with all the other movements of their quick and mobile temperament: it needed ecstatic art for its interpretation. What was cold and sober would not satisfy the men of these two cities. The Florentines, more justly balanced, less abandoned to the frenzies of impassioned impulse, less capable of feeling the rapt exaltation of the devotee, expressed themselves in art distinguished for its intellectual power, its sanity, its scientific industry, its adequacy to average human needs. Therefore, Florentine influences determined the course of painting in Central Italy. Therefore Giotto, who represented the Florentine genius in the fourteenth century, set his stamp upon the Lorenzetti. The mystic painters of Umbria and Siena have their high and honoured place in the history of Italian art.

[1] See *Inferno*, xxix. 121; the sonnets on the months by Cene dalla Chitarra, *Poeti del Primo Secolo*, vol. ii. pp. 196–207; the epithet 'Molles Senæ,' given by Beccadelli; and the remarks of De Comines.

They supply an element which, except in the work of Fra Angelico, was defective at Florence; but to the Florentines was committed the great charge of interpreting the spirit of Italian civilisation in all its branches, not for the cloister only, or the oratory, but for humanity at large, through painting.

Giotto and his followers, then, in the fourteenth century painted, as we have seen, the religious, philosophical, and social conceptions of their age. As artists, their great discovery was the secret of depicting life. The ideas they expressed belonged to the Middle Ages. But by their method and their spirit they anticipated the Renaissance. In executing their work upon the walls of palaces and churches, they employed a kind of fresco. Fresco was essentially the Florentine vehicle of expression. Among the peoples of Central Italy it took the place of mosaic in Sicily, Ravenna, and Venice, as the means of communicating ideas by forms to the unlettered laity, and as affording to the artist the widest and the freest sphere for the expression of his thoughts.[1]

[1] I have not thought it necessary to distinguish between *tempera* and *fresco*. In tempera painting the colours were mixed with egg, gum, and other vehicles dissolved in water, and laid upon a dry ground. In fresco painting the colours, mixed only with water, were laid upon plaster while still damp. The latter process replaced the former for wall-paintings in the fourteenth century.

CHAPTER V

PAINTING

Mediæval motives exhausted—New Impulse toward Technical Perfection—Naturalists in Painting—Intermediate Achievement needed for the Great Age of Art—Positive Spirit of the Fifteenth Century—Masaccio—The Modern Manner—Paolo Uccello—Perspective—Realistic Painters—The Model—Piero della Francesca—His Study of Form—Resurrection at Borgo San Sepolcro—Melozzo da Forli—Squarcione at Padua—Gentile da Fabriano—Fra Angelico—Benozzo Gozzoli—His Decorative Style—Lippo Lippi—Frescoes at Prato and Spoleto—Filippino Lippi—Sandro Botticelli—His value for the Student of Renaissance Fancy—His feeling for Mythology—Piero di Cosimo—Domenico Ghirlandajo—In what sense he sums up the Age—Prosaic Spirit—Florence hitherto supreme in Painting—Extension of Art activity throughout Italy—Medicean Patronage.

After the splendid outburst of painting in the first half of the fourteenth century, there came a lull. The thoughts and sentiments of mediæval Italy had been now set forth in art. The sincere and simple style of Giotto was worked out. But the new culture of the Revival had not as yet sufficiently penetrated the Italians for the painters to express it; nor had they mastered the technicalities of their craft in such a manner as to render the delineation of more complex forms of beauty possible. The years between 1400 and 1470 may be roughly marked out as the second period of great activity in painting. At this time sculpture, under the hands of Ghiberti, Donatello, and Luca della Robbia, had reached a higher point than the sister art. The debt the sculptors owed to Giotto, they now repaid in full measure to his successors, in obedience to the

law whereby sculpture, though subordinated, as in Italy, to painting, is more precocious in its evolution. One of the most marked features of this period was the progress in the art of design, due to bronze modelling and bas-relief; for the painters, labouring in the workshops of the goldsmiths and the stone-carvers, learned how to study the articulation of the human body, to imitate the nude, and to aim by means of graduated light and dark at rendering the effect of roundness in their drawing. The laws of perspective and foreshortening were worked out by Paolo Uccello and Brunelleschi. New methods of colouring were attempted by the Peselli and the Pollajuoli. Abandoning the conventional treatment of religious themes, the artists began to take delight in motives drawn from everyday experience. It became the fashion to introduce contemporary costumes, striking portraits, and familiar incidents into sacred subjects, so that many pictures of this period, though worthless to the student of religious art, are interesting for their illustration of Florentine custom and character. At the same time the painters began to imitate landscape and architecture, loading the background of their frescoes with pompous vistas of palaces and city towers, or subordinating their figures to fantastic scenery of wood and rock and sea-shore. Many were naturalists, delighting, like Gentile da Fabriano, in the delineation of field flowers and living creatures, or, like Piero di Cosimo, in the portrayal of things rare and curious. Gardens please their eyes, and birds and beasts and insects. Whole menageries and aviaries, for instance, were painted by Paolo Uccello. Others, again, abandoned the old ground of Christian story for the tales of Greece and Rome; and not the least charming products of the time are antique motives treated with the freshness of romantic feeling. We look in vain for the allegories of the Giottesque masters: that stage of thought has been traversed, and a new cycle of poetic ideas, fanciful, idyllic, corresponding to Boiardo's episodes

rather than to Dante's vision, opens for the artist. Instead of seeking to set forth vast subjects with the equality of mediocrity, like the Gaddi, or to invent architectonic compositions embracing the whole culture of their age, like the Lorenzetti, the painters were now bent upon realising some special quality of beauty, expressing some fantastic motive, or solving some technical problem of peculiar difficulty. They had, in fact, outgrown the childhood of their art; and while they had not yet attained to mastery, had abandoned the impossible task of making it the medium of universal expression. In this way the manifold efforts of the workers in the first half of the fifteenth century prepared the ground for the great painters of the Golden Age. It remained for Raphael and his contemporaries to achieve the final synthesis of art in masterpieces of consummate beauty. But this they could not have done without the aid of those innumerable intermediate labourers, whose productions occupy in art the place of Bacon's *media axiomata* in science. Remembering this, we ought not to complain that the purpose of painting at this epoch was divided, or that its achievements were imperfect. The whole intellectual conditions of the country were those of growth, experiment, preparation, and acquisition, rather than of full accomplishment. What happened in the field of painting, was happening also in the field of scholarship; and we have good reason to be thankful that by the very nature of the arts, these tentative endeavours have a more enduring charm than the dull tomes of contemporary students. Nor, again, is it rational to regret that painting, having started with the sincere desire of expressing the hopes and fears that agitate the soul of man, and raise him to a spiritual region, should now be occupied with lessons in perspective and anatomy. In the twofold process of discovering the world and man, this dry ground had inevitably to be explored, and its exploration could not fail to cost the sacrifice of much that

was impassioned and imaginative in the earlier and less scientific age of art.[1] The spirit of Cosimo de' Medici, almost cynical in its positivism, the spirit of Sixtus IV., almost godless in its egotism, were abroad in Italy at this period;[2] indeed, the fifteenth century presents at large a spectacle of prosaic worldliness and unideal aims. Yet the work done by the artists was the best work of the epoch, far more fruitful of results and far more permanently valuable than that of Filelfo inveighing in filthy satires against his personal foes, or of Beccadelli endeavouring to inoculate modern literature with the virus of pagan vices. Petrarch in the fourteenth century had preached the evangel of humanism; Giotto in the fourteenth century had given life to painting. The students of the fifteenth, though their spirit was so much baser and less large than Petrarch's, were following in the path marked out for them and leading forward to Erasmus. The painters of the fifteenth, though they lacked the unity of aim and freshness of their master, were learning what was needful for the crowning and fulfilment of his labours on a loftier stage.

Foremost among the pioneers of Renaissance-painting, towering above them all by head and shoulders, like Saul among the tribes of Israel, stands Masaccio.[3] The Brancacci Chapel of the Carmine at Florence, painted in fresco almost entirely by his hand, was the school where all succeeding artists studied, and whence Raphael deigned to borrow the composition and the figures of a portion of his Cartoons.

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 12.

[2] See Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, pp. 122–129.

[3] His real name was Tommaso di Ser Giovanni, of the family of Scheggia. Masaccio means in Tuscan, 'Great hulking Tom,' just as Masolino, his supposed master and fellow-worker, means 'Pretty little Tom.' Masolino was Tommaso di Cristofero Fini, born in 1384 in S. Croce. It is now thought that we have but little of his authentic work except the frescoes at Castiglione di Olona, near Milan. Masaccio was born at San Giovanni, in the upper valley of the Arno, in 1402. He died at Rome in 1429.

The 'Legend of S. Catherine,' painted by Masaccio in S. Clemente at Rome, though an earlier work, is scarcely less remarkable as evidence that a new age had begun for art. In his frescoes the qualities essential to the style of the Renaissance—what Vasari calls the modern manner—appear precociously full-formed. Besides life and nature they have dignity and breadth, the grand and heightened manner of emancipated art. Masaccio is not inferior to Giotto in his power of telling a story with simplicity; but he understands the value of perspective for realising the circumstances of the scene depicted. His august groups of the Apostles are surrounded by landscape tranquillising to the sense and pleasant to the eye. Mountain-lines and distant horizons lend space and largeness to his compositions, and the figures of his men and women move freely in a world prepared for them. In Masaccio's management of drapery we discern the influence of plastic art; without concealing the limbs, which are always modelled with a freedom that suggests the power of movement even in stationary attitudes, the voluminous folds and broad masses of powerfully coloured raiment invest his forms with a nobility unknown before in painting. His power of representing the nude is not less remarkable. But what above all else renders his style attractive is the sense of aërial space. For the first time in art the forms of living persons are shown moving in a transparent medium of light, graduated according to degrees of distance, and harmonised by tones that indicate an atmospheric unity. In comparing Masaccio with Giotto we must admit that, with so much gained, something has been sacrificed. Giotto succeeded in presenting the idea, the feeling, the pith of the event, and pierced at once to the very ground-root of imagination. Masaccio thinks overmuch, perhaps, of external form, and is intent on air-effects and colouring. He realises the phenomenal truth with a largeness and a dignity peculiar to himself. But we ask whether he was capable of

bringing close to our hearts the secret and the soul of spiritual things. Has not art beneath his touch become more scenic, losing thereby somewhat of dramatic poignancy?

Born in 1402, Masaccio left Florence in 1429 for Rome, and was not heard of by his family again. Thus perished, at the early age of twenty-seven, a painter whose work reveals not only the originality of real creative genius, but a maturity that moves our wonder. What might he not have done if he had lived? Between his style in the Brancacci chapel and that of Raphael in the Vatican there seems to be but a narrow gap, which might perchance have been passed over by this man, if death had spared him.

Masaccio can by no means be taken as a fair instance of the painters of his age. Gifted with exceptional powers, he overleaped the difficulties of his art, and arrived intuitively at results whereof as yet no scientific certainty had been secured. His contemporaries applied humbler talents to severe study, and wrought out by patient industry those principles which Masaccio had divined. Their work is therefore at the same time more archaic and more pedantic, judged by modern standards. It is difficult to imagine a style of painting less attractive than that of Paolo Uccello.[1] Yet his fresco of the 'Deluge' in the cloisters of S. Maria Novella, and his battle-pieces—one of which may be seen in the National Gallery—taught nearly all that painters needed of perspective. The lesson was conveyed in hard, dry, uncouth diagrams, ill-coloured and deficient in the quality of animation. At this period the painters, like the sculptors, were trained as goldsmiths, and Paolo had been a craftsman of that guild before he gave his whole mind to the study of linear perspective and the drawing of animals. The precision required in this trade forced artists

[1] His family name was Doni. He was born about 1396, and died at the age of about 73. He got his name Uccello from his partiality for painting birds, it is said.

to study the modelling of the human form, and promoted that crude naturalism which has been charged against their pictures. Carefully to observe, minutely to imitate some actual person—the Sandro of your workshop or the Cecco from the market-place—became the pride of painters. No longer fascinated by the dreams of mediæval mysticism, and unable for the moment to invest ideals of the fancy with reality, they meanwhile made the great discovery that the body of a man is a miracle of beauty, each limb a divine wonder, each muscle a joy as great as sight of stars or flowers. Much that is repulsive in the pictures of the Pollajuoli and Andrea del Castagno, the leaders in this branch of realism, is due to admiration for the newly studied mechanism of the human form. They seem to have cared but little to select their types or to accentuate expression, so long as they were able to portray the man before them with fidelity.[1] The comeliness of average humanity was enough for them; the difficulties of reproducing what they saw, exhausted their force. Thus the master-works on which they staked their reputation show them emulous of fame as craftsmen, while only here and there, in minor paintings for the most part, the poet that was in them sees the light. Brunelleschi told Donatello the truth when he said that his Christ was a crucified *contadino*. Intent on mastering the art of modelling, and determined above all things to be accurate, the sculptor had forgotten that something more was wanted in a crucifix than the careful study of a robust peasant-boy.

A story of a somewhat later date still further illustrates the dependence of the work of art upon the model in Renaissance Florence. Jacopo Sansovino made the statue of a youthful 'Bacchus' in close imitation of a lad called Pippo Fabro. Posing for hours together naked in a cold studio, Pippo fell into ill health, and finally went mad. In

[1] See above, p. 103, for what has been said about Verocchio's 'David.

his madness he frequently assumed the attitude of the 'Bacchus' to which his life had been sacrificed, and which is now his portrait. The legend of the painter who kept his model on a cross in order that he might the more minutely represent the agonies of death by crucifixion, is but a mythus of the realistic method carried to its logical extremity.

Piero della Francesca, a native of Borgo San Sepolcro, and a pupil of Domenico Veneziano, must be placed among the painters of this period who advanced their art by scientific study. He carried the principles of correct drawing and solid modelling as far as it is possible for the genius of man to do, and composed a treatise on perspective in the vulgar tongue. But these are not his only titles to fame. By dignity of portraiture, by loftiness of style, and by a certain poetical solemnity of imagination, he raised himself above the level of the mass of his contemporaries. Those who have once seen his fresco of the 'Resurrection' in the hall of the Compagnia della Misericordia at Borgo San Sepolcro, will never forget the deep impression of solitude and aloofness from all earthly things produced by it. It is not so much the admirable grouping and masterly drawing of the four sleeping soldiers, or even the majestic type of the Christ emergent without effort from the grave, as the communication of a mood felt by the painter and instilled into our souls, that makes this by far the grandest, most poetic, and most awe-inspiring picture of the Resurrection. The landscape is simple and severe, with the cold light upon it of the dawn before the sun is risen. The drapery of the ascending Christ is tinged with auroral colours like the earliest clouds of morning; and His level eyes, with the mystery of the slumber of the grave still upon them, seem gazing, far beyond our scope of vision, into the region of the eternal and illimitable. Thus, with Piero for mystagogue, we enter an inner shrine of deep religious revelation. The same high imaginative faculty marks the fresco of the

'Dream of Constantine' in S. Francesco at Arezzo, where, it may be said in passing, the student of art must learn to estimate what Piero could do in the way of accurate foreshortening, powerful delineation of solid bodies, and noble treatment of drapery.[1] To Piero, again, we owe most precious portraits of two Italian princes, Sigismondo Pandolfo Malatesta and Federigo of Urbino, masterpieces[2] of fidelity to nature and sound workmanship.

In addition to the many great paintings that command our admiration, Piero claims honour as the teacher of Melozzo da Forli and of Luca Signorelli. Little is left to show the greatness of Melozzo; but the frescoes preserved in the Quirinal are enough to prove that he continued the grave and lofty manner of his master.[3] Signorelli bears a name illustrious in the first rank of Italian painters; and to speak of him will be soon my duty. It was the special merit of these artists to elevate the ideal of form and to seek after sublimity, without departing from the path of conscientious labour, in an age preoccupied on the one hand with technicality and naturalism, on the other with decorative prettiness and pietism.

While the Florentine and Umbro-Tuscan masters were perfecting the arts of accurate design, a similar direction toward scientific studies was given to the painters of Northern Italy at Padua. Michael Savonarola, writing his panegyric

[1] A drawing made in red chalk for this 'Dream of Constantine' has been published in facsimile by Ottley, in his *Italian School of Design*. He wrongly attributes it, however, to Giorgione, and calls it a 'Subject Unknown.'

[2] The one in S. Francesco at Rimini, the other in the Uffizzi.

[3] Two angels have recently been published by the Arundel Society, who have also copied Melozzo's wall-painting of Sixtus IV. in the Vatican. It is probable that the picture in the Royal Collection at Windsor, of Duke Frederick of Urbino listening to the lecture of a Humanist, is also a work of Melozzo's, much spoiled by re-painting. See Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, p. 220.

of Padua about 1440, expressly mentions Perspective as a branch of philosophy taught in the high school;[1] and the influence of Francesco Squarcione, though exaggerated by Vasari, was not inconsiderable. This man, who began life as a tailor or embroiderer, was early interested in the fine arts. Like Ciriac of Ancona, he had a taste for travel and collection,[2] visiting the sacred soil of Greece and sojourning in divers towns of Italy, everywhere making drawings, copying pictures, taking casts from statues, and amassing memoranda on the relics of antiquity as well as on the methods practised by contemporary painters. Equipped with these aids to study, Squarcione returned to Padua, his native place, where he opened a kind of school for painters. It is clear that he was himself less an artist than an amateur of painting, with a turn for teaching, and a conviction, based upon the humanistic instincts of his age, that the right way of learning was by imitation of the antique. During the course of his career he is said to have taught no less than 137 pupils, training his apprentices by the exhibition of casts and drawings, and giving them instruction in the science of perspective.[3] From his studio issued the mighty Andrea Mantegna, whose life-work, one of the most weighty moments in the history of modern art, will be noticed at length in the next chapter. For the present it is enough to observe that through Squarcione the scientific and humanistic movement of the fifteenth century was communicated to the art of Northern Italy. There, as at Florence, painting was separated from ecclesiastical tradition, and a new starting-point was sought in

[1] Muratori, vol. xxiv. 1181.

[2] For Ciriac of Ancona, see Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, p. 113.

[3] The services rendered by Squarcione to art have been thoroughly discussed by Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Painting in North Italy*, vol. i. chap. 2. I cannot but think that they underrate the importance of his school.

the study of mathematical principles, and the striving after form for its own sake.

Without attempting the detailed history of painting in this period of divided energy and diverse effort, it is needful here to turn aside and notice those masters of the fifteenth century who remained comparatively uninfluenced by the scholastic studies of their contemporaries. Of these, the earliest and most notable was Gentile da Fabriano, the last great painter of the Gubbian school.[1] In the predella of his masterpiece at Florence there is a little panel, which attracts attention as one of the earliest attempts to represent a sunrise. The sun has just appeared above one of those bare sweeping hillsides so characteristic of Central Italian landscape. Part of the country lies untouched by morning, cold and grey: the rest is silvered with the level light, falling sideways on the burnished leaves and red fruit of the orange trees, and casting shadows from olive branches on the furrows of a new-ploughed field. Along the road journey Joseph and Mary and the infant Christ, so that you may call this little landscape a 'Flight into Egypt,' if you choose. Gentile, with all his Umbrian pietism, was a painter for whom the fair sights of the earth had exquisite value. The rich costumes of the Eastern kings, their train of servants, their hawks and horses, hounds and monkeys, are painted by him with scrupulous fidelity; and nothing can be more true to nature than the wild flowers he has copied in the framework of this picture. Yet we perceive that, though he felt in his own way the naturalistic impulse of the age, he had scarcely anything in common with masters like Uccello or Verocchio.

Still less had Fra Angelico. Of all the painters of this

[1] He was born between 1360 and 1370, and he settled at Florence about 1422, where he opened a *bottega* in S. Trinità. In 1423 he painted his masterpiece, the 'Adoration of the Magi,' now exhibited in the Florentine Academy of Arts.

period he most successfully resisted the persuasions of the Renaissance, and perfected an art that owed little to sympathy with the external world. He thought it a sin to study or to imitate the naked form, and his most beautiful faces seem copied from angels seen in visions, not from any sons of men. While the artists around him were absorbed in mastering the laws of geometry and anatomy, Fra Angelico sought to express the inner life of the adoring soul. Only just so much of realism, whether in the drawing of the body and its drapery, or in the landscape background, as seemed necessary for suggesting the emotion or for setting forth the story, found its way into his pictures. The message they convey might have been told almost as perfectly upon the lute or viol. His world is a strange one—a world not of hills and fields and flowers and men of flesh and blood, but one where the people are embodied ecstasies, the colours tints from evening clouds or apocalyptic jewels, the scenery a flood of light or a background of illuminated gold. His mystic gardens, where the ransomed souls embrace, and dance with angels on the lawns outside the City of the Lamb, are such as were never trodden by the foot of man in any paradise of earth.

Criticism has a hard task in attempting to discern the merit of the several painters of this time. It is clear that we must look not to Fra Angelico but to Masaccio for the progressive forces that were carrying art forward to complete accomplishment. Yet the charm of Masaccio is as nothing in comparison with that which holds us spell-bound before the sacred and impassioned reveries of the Fiesolan monk. Masaccio had inestimable value for his contemporaries. Fra Angelico, now that we know all Masaccio can teach, has a quality so unique that we return again and again to the contemplation of his visions. Thus it often happens that we are tempted to exaggerate the historical importance of

one painter because he touches us by some peculiar quality, and to over-estimate the intrinsic value of another because he was a motive power in his own age. Both these temptations should be resolutely resisted by the student who is capable of discerning different kinds of excellence and diverse titles to affectionate remembrance. Tracing the history of Italian painting is like pursuing a journey down an ever-broadening river, whose affluents are Giotto and Masaccio, Ghirlandajo, Signorelli, and Mantegna. We have to turn aside and land upon the shore, in order to visit the heaven-reflecting lakelet, self-encompassed and secluded, called Angelico.

Benozzo Gozzoli, the pupil of Fra Angelico, but in no sense the continuator of his tradition, exhibits the blending of several styles by a genius of less creative than assimilative force. That he was keenly interested in the problems of perspective and foreshortening, and that none of the knowledge collected by his fellow-workers had escaped him, is sufficiently proved by his frescoes at Pisa. His compositions are rich in architectural details, not always chosen with pure taste, but painted with an almost infantine delight in the magnificence of buildings. Quaint birds and beasts and reptiles crowd his landscapes; while his imagination runs riot in rocks and rivers, trees of all variety, and rustic incidents adopted from real life. At the same time he felt an enjoyment like that of Gentile da Fabriano in depicting the pomp and circumstance of pageantry, and no Florentine of the fifteenth century was more fond of assembling the personages of contemporary history in groups.[1] Thus he showed himself sensitive to the chief influences of the earlier Renaissance, and combined the scientific and naturalistic tendencies of his age in a manner not devoid of native poetry. What he lacked was

[1] See, for instance, the valuable portraits of the Medicean family with Ficino and Poliziano, in the fresco of the 'Tower of Babel' at Pisa.

depth of feeling, the sense of noble form, the originative force of a great mind. His poetry of invention, though copious and varied, owed its charm to the unstudied grace of improvisation, and he often undertook subjects where his idyllic rather than dramatic genius failed to sustain him. It is difficult, for instance, to comprehend how M. Rio could devote two pages to Gozzoli's 'Destruction of Sodom,' so comparatively unimpressive in spite of its aggregated incidents, when he passes by the 'Fulminati' of Signorelli, so tragic in its terrible simplicity, with a word.[1]

This painter's marvellous rapidity of execution enabled him to produce an almost countless series of decorative works. The best of these are the frescoes of the Pisan Campo Santo, of the Riccardi Palace of Florence, of San Gemignano, and of Montefalco. It has been well said of Gozzoli that, though he attempted grand subjects on a large scale, he could not rise above the limitations of a style better adapted to the decoration of *cassoni* than to fresco.[2] Yet within the range of his own powers there are few more fascinating painters. His feeling for fresh nature—for hunters in the woods at night or dawn, for vintage-gatherers among their grapes, for festival troops of cavaliers and pages, and for the marriage-dances of young men and maidens—yields a delightful gladness to compositions lacking the simplicity of Giotto and the dignity of Masaccio.[3] No one knew better how to sketch the quarrels of little boys in their nursery, or the laughter of serving-women, or children

[1] *L'Art Chrétien*, vol. ii. p. 397.

[2] The same remark might be made about the Venetian Bonifazio. It is remarkable that the 'Adoration of the Magi' was always a favourite subject with painters of this calibre.

[3] I may refer to the picture of the hunters in the Taylor Gallery at Oxford, the 'Vintage of Noah' at Pisa, the attendants of the Magi in the Riccardi Palace, and the *Carola* in the 'Marriage of Jacob and Rachel' at Pisa.

carrying their books to school;[1] and when the idyllic genius of the man was applied to graver themes, his fancy supplied him with multitudes of angels waving rainbow-coloured wings above fair mortal faces. Bevies of them nestle like pigeons on the penthouse of the hut of Bethlehem, or crowd together round the infant Christ.[2]

From these observations on the style of Benozzo Gozzoli it will be seen that in the evolution of Renaissance culture he may be compared with the romantic poets for whom the cheerfulness of nature and the joy that comes to men from living in a many-coloured world of inexhaustible delight were sufficient sources of inspiration. It should be mentioned lastly that he enjoyed the patronage and friendship of the Medicean princes.

Another painter favoured by the Medici was Fra Filippo Lippi, whose life and art-work were alike the deviation of a pleasure-loving temperament from its natural sphere into the service of the Church. Left an orphan at the age of two years, he was brought up by an aunt, who placed him, as a boy of eight, in the convent of the Carmine at Florence. For monastic duties he had no vocation, and the irregularities of his behaviour caused scandal even in that age of cynical indulgence. It can scarcely be doubted that the schism between his practice and profession served to debase and vulgarise a genius of fine imaginative quality, while the uncongenial work of decorating choirs and painting altar-pieces limed the wings of his swift spirit with the dulness of routine that savoured of hypocrisy. Bound down to sacred subjects, he was too apt to make angels out of street-urchins,

[1] 'Stories of Isaac and Ishmael and of Jacob and Esau' at Pisa, and 'Story of S. Augustine' at San Gemignano. Nothing can be prettier than the school children in the latter series. The group of the little boy, horsed upon a bigger boy's back for a whipping, is one of the most natural episodes in painting.

[2] Riccardi Chapel.

and to paint the portraits of his peasant-loves for Virgins.[1] His delicate sense of natural beauty gave peculiar charm to this false treatment of religious themes. Nothing, for example, can be more attractive than the rows of angels bearing lilies in his 'Coronation of the Virgin;'[2] and yet, when we regard them closely, we find that they have no celestial quality of form or feature. Their grace is earthly, and the spirit breathed upon the picture is the loveliness of colour, quiet and yet glowing—blending delicate blues and greens with whiteness purged of glare. The beauties as well as the defects of such compositions make us regret that Fra Filippo never found a more congenial sphere for his imagination. As a painter of subjects half-humorous and half-pathetic, or as the illustrator of romantic stories, we fancy that he might have won fame rivalled only by the greatest colourists.

One such picture it was granted him to paint, and this is his masterpiece. In the prime of life he was commissioned to decorate the choir of the cathedral at Prato with the legends of S. John Baptist and S. Stephen. All of these frescoes are noteworthy for their firm grasp upon reality in the portraits of Florentine worthies, and for the harmonious disposition of the groups; but the scene of Salome dancing before Herod is the best for its poetic feeling. Her movement across the floor before the tyrant and his guests at table, the quaint fluttering of her drapery, the well-bred admiration of the spectators, their horror when she brings the Baptist's head to Herodias, and the weak face of the half-remorseful Herod are expressed with a dramatic power that shows the genius of a poet painter. And even more lovely than Salome are a pair of girls locked in each other's arms close by Herodias on the daïs. A natural and spontaneous melody,

[1] For an example, the picture of Madonna worshipping the infant Christ upheld by two little angels in the Uffizzi.

[2] In the Academy of Fine Arts at Florence.

not only in the suggested movements of this scene, but also in the colouring, choice of form, and treatment of drapery, makes it one of the most musical of pictures ever painted.

Fra Filippo was not so successful in the choir of the cathedral at Spoleto, where he undertook to paint scenes from the life of the Virgin. Yet those who have not examined these frescoes, ruinous in their decay and spoiled by stupid restoration, can form no just notion of the latent capacity of this great master. The whole of the half-dome above the tribune is filled with a 'Coronation of Madonna.' A circular rainbow surrounds both her and Christ. She is kneeling with fiery rays around her, glorified by her assumption into heaven. Christ is enthroned, and at His side stands a seat prepared for His mother, as soon as the crown that He is placing on her head shall have made her Queen. From the outer courts of heaven, thronged with multitudes of celestial beings, angels are crowding in, breaking the lines of the prismatic aureole, as though the ardour of their joy could scarcely be repressed; while the everlasting light of God sheds radiance from above, and far below lies earth with diminished sun and moon. The boldness of conception in this singular fresco reveals a genius capable of grappling with such problems as Tintoretto solved. Fra Filippo died at Spoleto, and left his work unfinished to the care of his assistant, the Fra Diamante. Over his tomb Lorenzo de' Medici caused a monument to be erected, and Poliziano wrote Latin couplets to commemorate the fame of a painter highly prized by his patrons.

The space devoted in these pages to Fra Lippo Lippi is justified not only by the excellence of his own work, but also by the influence he exercised over two of the best Florentine painters of the fifteenth century. Whether Filippino Lippi was in truth his son by Lucrezia Buti, a novice he is said to have carried from her cloister in Prato, has been called in

question by recent critics; but they adduce no positive arguments for discrediting the story of Vasari.[1] There can, however, be no doubt that to the Frate, whether he was his father or only his teacher, Filippino owed his style. His greatest works were painted in continuation of Masaccio's frescoes in the Carmine at Florence. It is the best warrant of their excellence that we feel them worthy to hold the place they do, and that Raphael transferred one of their motives, the figure of S. Paul addressing S. Peter in prison, to his cartoon of 'Mars' Hill.' That he was not so accomplished as Masaccio in the art of composition, that his scale of colour is less pleasing, and that his style in general lacks the elevation of his mighty predecessor, is not sufficient to place him in any position of humiliating inferiority.[2] What above all things interests the student of the Renaissance in Filippino's work, is the powerful action of revived classicism on his manner. This can be traced better in the Caraffa Chapel of S. Maria sopra Minerva at Rome and in the Strozzi Chapel of S. Maria Novella at Florence than in the Carmine. The 'Triumph of S. Thomas Aquinas' and the 'Miracle of S. John' are remarkable for an almost insolent display of Roman

[1] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. ii. chap. 19. Nothing was more common in the practice of Italian arts than for pupils to take their names from their masters, in the same way as they took them from their fathers, by the prefix *di* or otherwise.

[2] The most simply beautiful of Filippino's pictures is the oil-painting in the Badia at Florence, which represents Madonna attended by angels dictating the story of her life to S. Bernard. In this most lovely religious picture Filippino comes into direct competition with Perugino (see the same subject at Munich), without suffering by the contrast. The type of Our Lady, striven after by Botticelli and other masters of his way of feeling, seems to me more thoroughly attained by Filippino than by any of his fellow-workers. She is a woman acquainted with grief and nowise distinguished by the radiance of her beauty among the daughters of earth. It is measureless love for the mother of his Lord that makes S. Bernard bow before her with eyes of wistful adoration and hushed reverence.

antiquities—not studied, it need scarcely be observed, with the scientific accuracy of Alma Tadema—for such science was non-existent in the fifteenth century—but paraded with a kind of passion. To this delight in antique details Filippino added violent gestures, strange attitudes, and affected draperies, producing a general result impressive through the artist's energy, but quaint and unattractive.

Sandro Botticelli, the other disciple of Fra Lippo, bears a name of greater mark. He is one of those artists, much respected in their own days, who suffered eclipse from the superior splendour of immediate successors, and to whom, through sympathy stimulated by prolonged study of the fifteenth century, we have of late paid tardy and perhaps exaggerated honours.[1] His fellow-workers seem to have admired him as an able draughtsman gifted with a rare if whimsical imagination; but no one recognised in him a leader of his age. For us he has an almost unique value as representing the interminglement of antique and modern fancy at a moment of transition, as embodying in some of his pictures the subtlest thought and feeling of men for whom the classic myths were beginning to live once more, while

[1] The study of the fine arts offers few subjects of more curious interest than the vicissitudes through which painters of the type of Botticelli, not absolutely and confessedly in the first rank, but attractive by reason of their relation to the spirit of their age, and of the seal of *intimité* set upon their work have passed. In the last century and the beginning of this, our present preoccupation with Botticelli would have passed for a mild lunacy, because he has none of the qualities then most in vogue and most enthusiastically studied, and because the moment in the history of culture he so faithfully represents, was then but little understood. The prophecy of Mr. Ruskin, the tendencies of our best contemporary art in Mr. Burne Jones's painting, the specific note of our recent fashionable poetry, and, more than all, our delight in the delicately poised psychological problems of the middle Renaissance, have evoked a kind of hero-worship for this excellent artist and true poet.

new guesses were timidly hazarded in the sphere of orthodoxy.[1] Self-confident sensuality had not as yet encouraged painters to substitute a florid rhetoric for the travail of their brain; nor was enough known about antiquity to make the servile imitation of Greek or Roman fragments possible. Yet scholarship had already introduced a novel element into the culture of the nation. It was no doubt with a kind of wonder that the artists heard of Fauns and Sylvans, and the birth of Aphrodite from the waves. Such fables took deep hold upon their fancy, stirring them to strange and delicate creations, the offspring of their own thought, and no mere copies of marbles seen in statue galleries. The very imperfection of these pictures lends a value to them in the eyes of the student, by helping him to comprehend exactly how the revelations of the humanists affected the artistic sense of Italy.

In the mythological work of Botticelli there is always an element of allegory, recalling the Middle Ages and rendering it far truer to the feelings of the fifteenth century than to the myths it illustrates. His painting of the 'Spring,' suggested by a passage from Lucretius,[2] is exquisitely poetic; and yet the true spirit of the Latin verse has not been seized—to have done that would have taxed the energies of Titian—but something special to the artist and significant for Medicean

[1] A friend, writing to me from Italy, speaks thus of Botticelli, and of the painters associated with him: 'When I ask myself what it is I find fascinating in him—for instance, which of his pictures, or what element in them—I am forced to admit that it is the touch of paganism in him, the fairy-story element, *the echo of a beautiful lapsed mythology which he has found the means of transmitting.*' The words I have printed in italics seem to me very true. At the same time we must bear in mind that the scientific investigation of nature had not in the fifteenth century begun to stand between the sympathetic intellect and the outer world. There was still the possibility of that 'lapsed mythology,' the dream of poets and the delight of artists, seeming positively the best form of expression for sentiments aroused by nature.

[2] *De Rerum Naturâ*, lib. v. 737.

scholarship has been added. There is none of the Roman largeness and freedom in its style; Venus and her Graces are even melancholy, and their movements savour of affectation. This combination or confusion of artistic impulses in Botticelli, this treatment of pagan themes in the spirit of mediæval mysticism, sometimes ended in grotesqueness. It might suffice to cite the pregnant 'Aphrodite' in the National Gallery, if the 'Mars and Venus' in the same collection were not even a more striking instance. Mars is a young Florentine, whose throat and chest are beautifully studied from the life, but whose legs and belly, belonging no doubt to the same model, fall far short of heroic form. He lies fast asleep with the corners of his mouth drawn down, as though he were about to snore. Opposite there sits a woman, weary and wan, draped from neck to foot in the thin raiment Botticelli loved. Four little goat-footed Cupids playing with the armour of the sleeping lad complete the composition. These wanton loves are admirably conceived and exquisitely drawn; nor indeed can any drawing exceed in beauty the line that leads from the flank along the ribs and arm of Mars up to his lifted elbow. The whole design, like one of Piero di Cosimo's pictures in another key, leaves a strong impression on the mind, due partly to the oddity of treatment, partly to the careful work displayed, and partly to the individuality of the artist. It gives us keen pleasure to feel exactly how a painter like Botticelli applied the dry naturalism of the early Florentine Renaissance, as well as his own original imagination, to a subject he imperfectly realised. Yet are we right in assuming that he meant the female figure in this group for Aphrodite, the sleeping man for Ares? A Greek or a Roman would have rejected this picture as false to the mythus of Mars and Venus; and whether Botticelli wished to be less descriptive than emblematic, might be fairly questioned. The face and attitude of that unseductive Venus, wide awake and melancholy,

opposite her snoring lover, seems to symbolise the indignities which women may have to endure from insolent and sottish boys with only youth to recommend them. This interpretation, however, sounds like satire. We are left to conjecture whether Botticelli designed his composition for an allegory of intemperance, the so-called Venus typifying some moral quality.

Botticelli's 'Birth of Aphrodite' expresses this transient moment in the history of the Renaissance with more felicity. It would be impossible for any painter to design a more exquisitely outlined figure than that of his Venus, who, with no covering but her golden hair, is wafted to the shore by zephyrs. Roses fall upon the ruffled waves, and the young gods of the air twine hands and feet together as they float. In the picture of 'Spring' there is the same choice of form, the same purity of line, the same rare interlacement in the limbs. It would seem as though Botticelli intended every articulation of the body to express some meaning, and this, though it enhances the value of his work for sympathetic students, often leads him to the verge of affectation. Nothing but a touch of affectation in the twined fingers of Raphael and Tobias impairs the beauty of one of Botticelli's best pictures at Turin. We feel the same discord looking at them as we do while reading the occasional *concetti* in Petrarch; and all the more in each case does the discord pain us because we know that it results from their specific quality carried to excess.

Botticelli's sensibility to the refinements of drawing gave peculiar character to all his work. Attention has frequently been called to the beauty of his roses.[1] Every curl in their frail petals is rendered with as much care as though they were the hands or feet of Graces. Nor is it, perhaps, a mere

[1] The rose-tree background in a Madonna belonging to Lord Elcho is a charming instance of the value given to flowers by careful treatment.

fancy to imagine that the corolla of an open rose suggested to Botticelli's mind the composition of his best-known picture, the circular 'Coronation of the Virgin' in the Uffizzi. That masterpiece combines all Botticelli's best qualities. For rare distinction of beauty in the faces it is unique, while the mystic calm and resignation, so misplaced in his Aphrodites, find a meaning here.[1] There is only one other picture in Italy, a 'Madonna and Child with S. Catherine' in a landscape by Boccaccino da Cremona, that in any degree rivals the peculiar beauty of its types.[2]

Sandro Botticelli was not a great painter in the same sense as Andrea Mantegna. But he was a true poet within the limits of a certain sphere. We have to seek his parallel among the verse-writers rather than the artists of his day. Some of the stanzas of Poliziano and Boiardo, in particular, might have been written to explain his pictures, or his pictures might have been painted to illustrate their verses.[3] In both Poliziano and Boiardo we find the same touch upon antique

[1] I cannot bring myself to accept Mr. Pater's reading of the Madonna's expression. It seems to me that Botticelli meant to portray the mingled awe and tranquillity of a mortal mother chosen for the Son of God. He appears to have sometimes aimed at conveying more than painting can compass; and, since he had not Lionardo's genius, he gives sadness, mournfulness, or discontent, for some more subtle mood. Next to the Madonna of the Uffizzi, Botticelli's loveliest religious picture to my mind is the 'Nativity' belonging to Mr. Fuller Maitland. Poetic imagination in a painter has produced nothing more graceful and more tender than the dance of angels in the air above, and the embracement of the angels and the shepherds on the lawns below.

[2] In the Academy of Fine Arts at Venice. I do not mention this picture as a complete pendant to Botticelli's famous *tondo*. The faces of S. Catherine and Madonna, however, have something of the rarity that is so striking in that work.

[3] I might mention stanzas 122–124 of Poliziano's *Giostra*, describing Venus in the lap of Mars; or stanzas 99–107, describing the birth of Venus; and from Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato*, I might quote the episode of Rinaldo's punishment by Love (lib. ii. canto xv. 43), or the tale of Silvanella and Narcissus (lib. ii. canto xvii. 49).

things as in Botticelli; and this makes him serviceable almost above all painters to the readers of Renaissance poetry.

The name of Piero di Cosimo has been mentioned incidentally in connection with that of Botticelli; and though his life exceeds the limits assigned for this chapter, so many links unite him to the class of painters I have been discussing, that I can find no better place to speak of him than this. His biography forms one of the most amusing chapters in Vasari, who has taken great delight in noting Piero's quaint humours and eccentric habits, and whose description of a Carnival triumph devised by him is one of our most precious documents in illustration of Renaissance pageantry.[1] The point that connects him with Botticelli is the romantic treatment of classical mythology, best exemplified in his pictures of the tale of Perseus and Andromeda.[2] Piero was by nature and employment a decorative painter; the construction of cars for pageants, and the adornment of dwelling rooms and marriage chests, affected his whole style, rendering it less independent and more quaint than that of Botticelli. Landscape occupies the main part of his compositions, made up by a strange amalgam of the most eccentric details—rocks toppling over blue bays, sea-caverns, and fantastic mountain ranges. Groups of little figures disposed upon these spaces tell the story, and the best invention of the artist is lavished on the form of monstrous creatures like the dragon slain by Perseus. There is no attempt to treat the classic subject in a classic spirit: to do that, and to fail in doing it, remained for Cellini.[3] We have, on the contrary, before us an image of

[1] I hope to make use of this passage in a future section of my work on the Italian Poetry of the Renaissance. Therefore I pass by this portion of Piero's art-work now.

[2] Uffizzi Gallery.

[3] See the bas-relief upon the pedestal of his 'Perseus' in the Loggia de' Lanzi.

the orc, as it appeared to Ariosto's fancy—a creature borrowed from romance and made to play its part in a Greek myth. The same criticism applies to Piero's picture of the murdered Procris watched by a Satyr of the woodland.[1] In creating his Satyr the painter has not had recourse to any antique bas-relief, but has imagined for himself a being half human, half bestial, and yet wholly real; nor has he portrayed in Procris a nymph of Greek form, but a girl of Florence. The strange animals and gaudy flowers introduced into the landscape background further remove the subject from the sphere of classic treatment. Florentine realism and quaint fancy being thus curiously blended, the artistic result may be profitably studied for the light it throws upon the so-called Paganism of the earlier Renaissance. Fancy at that moment was more free than when superior knowledge of antiquity had created a demand for reproductive art, and when the painters thought less of the meaning of the fable for themselves than of its capability of being used as a machine for the display of erudition.

It remains to speak of the painter who closes and at the same time gathers up the whole tradition of this period. Domenico Ghirlandajo deserves this place of honour not because he had the keenest intuitions, the deepest thought, the strongest passion, the subtlest fancy, the loftiest imagination—for in all these points he was excelled by some one or other of his contemporaries or predecessors—but because his intellect was the most comprehensive and his mastery of art the most complete. His life lasted from 1449 to 1498, and he did not distinguish himself as a painter till he was past thirty.[2] Therefore he does not properly fall within the

[1] In the National Gallery.

[2] His family name was Domenico di Currado di Doffo Bigordi. He probably worked during his youth and early manhood as a goldsmith and got his artist's name from the trade of making golden chaplets for the Florentine women. See Vasari, vol. v. p. 66.

limit of 1470, assigned roughly to this age of transition in painting. But in style and spirit he belonged to it, resuming in his own work the qualities we find scattered through the minor artists of the fifteenth century, and giving them the unity of fusion in a large and lucid manner. Like the painters hitherto discussed, he was working toward the full Renaissance; yet he reached it neither in ideality nor in freedom. His art is the art of the understanding only; and to this the masters of the golden age added radiance, sublimity, grace, passion—qualities of the imagination beyond the scope of men like Ghirlandajo.

It is almost with reluctance that a critic feels obliged to name this powerful but prosaic painter as the Giotto of the fifteenth century in Florence, the tutelary angel of an age inaugurated by Masaccio. He was a consummate master of the science collected by his predecessors. No one surpassed him in the use of fresco. His orderly composition, in the distribution of figures and the use of architectural accessories, is worthy of all praise; his portraiture is dignified and powerful;[1] his choice of form and treatment of drapery, noble. Yet we cannot help noting his deficiency in the finer sense of beauty, the absence of poetic inspiration or feeling in his work, the commonplaceness of his colour, and his wearisome reiteration of calculated effects. He never arrests attention by sallies of originality, or charms us by the delicacies of suggestive fancy. He is always at the level of his own achievement, so that in the end we are as tired with able Ghirlandajo as the men of Athens with just Aristides. Who, however, but Ghirlandajo could have composed the frescoes of 'S. Fina' at S. Gemignano, the fresco of the 'Death of S.

[1] What, after all, remains the grandest quality of Ghirlandajo is his powerful drawing of characteristic heads. They are as various as they are vigorous. What a nation of strong men must the Florentines have been, we feel while gazing at his frescoes.

Francis' in S. Trinità at Florence, or that again of the 'Birth of the Virgin' in S. Maria Novella? There is something irritating in pure common sense imported into art, and Ghirlandajo's masterpieces are the apotheosis of that quality. How correct, how judicious, how sagacious, how mathematically ordered! we exclaim; but we gaze without emotion, and we turn away without regret. It does not vex us to read how Ghirlandajo used to scold his prentices for neglecting trivial orders that would fill his purse with money. Similar traits of character pain us with a sense of impropriety in Perugino. They harmonise with all we feel about the work of Ghirlandajo. It is bitter mortification to know that Michael Angelo never found space or time sufficient for his vast designs in sculpture. It is a positive relief to think that Ghirlandajo sighed in vain to have the circuit of the walls of Florence given him to paint. How he would have covered them with compositions, stately, flowing, easy, sober, and incapable of stirring any feeling in the soul!

Though Ghirlandajo lacked almost every true poetic quality, he combined the art of distributing figures in a given space, with perspective, fair knowledge of the nude, and truth to nature, in greater perfection than any other single painter of the age he represents; and since these were precisely the gifts of that age to the great Renaissance masters, we accord to him the place of historical honour. It should be added that, like almost all the artists of this epoch, he handled sacred and profane, ancient and modern, subjects in the same style, introducing contemporary customs and costumes. His pictures are therefore valuable for their portraits and their illustration of Florentine life. Fresco was his favourite vehicle; and in this preference he showed himself a true master of the school of Florence: but he is said to have maintained that mosaic, as more durable, was superior to

wall-painting. This saying, if it be authentic, justifies our criticism of his cold achievement as a painter.

Reviewing the ground traversed in this and the last chapter, we find that the painting of Tuscany, and in particular the Florentine section of it, has absorbed attention. It is characteristic of the next age that other districts of Italy began to contribute their important quota to the general culture of the nation. The force generated in Tuscany expanded and dilated till every section of the country took part in the movement which Florence had been first to propagate. What was happening in scholarship began to manifest itself in art, for the same law of growth and distribution affected both alike; and thus the local differences of the Italians were to some extent abolished. The nation, never destined to acquire political union in the Renaissance, possessed at last an intellectual unity in its painters and its students, which justifies our speaking of the great men of the golden period as Italians and not as citizens of such or such a burgh. In the Middle Ages United Italy was an Idea to theorists like Dante, who dreamed for her an actual supremacy beneath her Emperor's sway in Rome. The reasoning to which they trusted proved fallacious, and their hopes were quenched. Instead of the political empire of the 'De Monarchiâ,' a spiritual empire had been created, and the Italians were never more powerful in Europe than when their sacred city was being plundered by the imperial bandits in 1527. It is necessary, at the risk of some repetition, to keep this point before the reader, if only as an apology for the method of treatment to be followed in the next chapter, where the painters of the mid-Renaissance period will be reviewed less in relation to their schools and cities than as representatives of the Italian spirit.

Since the intellectual unity gained by the Italians in the age of the Renaissance was chiefly due to the Florentines, it is a matter of some moment to reconsider the direct influences

brought to bear upon the arts in Florence during the fifteenth century. I have chosen Ghirlandajo as the representative of painting in that period. I have also expressed the opinion that his style is singularly cold and prosaic, and have hinted that this prosaic and cold quality was caused by a defect of emotional enthusiasm, by preoccupation with finite aims. Herein Ghirlandajo did but reflect the temper of his age—that temper which Cosimo de' Medici, the greatest patron of both art and scholarship in Florence before 1470, represented in his life and in his public policy. It concerns us, therefore, to take into account the nature of the patronage extended by the Medici to art. Excessive praise and blame have been showered upon these burgher princes in almost equal quantities; so that, if we were to place Roscoe and Rio, as the representatives of conflicting views, in the scales together, they would balance each other, and leave the index quivering. This bare statement warns the critic to be cautious, and inclines him to accept the intermediate conclusion that neither the Medici nor the artists could escape the conditions of their century. It is specially argued on the one hand against the Medici that they encouraged a sensual and worldly style of art, employing the painters to decorate their palaces with nude figures, and luring them away from sacred to profane subjects. Yet Cosimo gave orders to Donatello for his 'David' and his 'Judith,' employed Michellozzo and Brunelleschi to build him convents and churches, and filled the library of S. Marco, where Fra Angelico was painting, with a priceless collection of MSS. His own private chapel was decorated by Benozzo Gozzoli. Fra Lippo Lippi and Michael Angelo Buonarroti were the house-friends of Lorenzo de' Medici. Leo Battista Alberti was a member of his philosophical society. The only great Florentine artist who did not stand in cordial relations to the Medicean circle, was Lionardo da Vinci. This sufficiently shows that the Medicean patronage was commensurate with

the best products of Florentine genius; nor would it be easy to demonstrate that encouragement, so largely exhibited and so intelligently used, could have been in the main injurious to the arts.

There is, however, a truth in the old grudge against the Medicean princes. They enslaved Florence; and even painting was not slow to suffer from the stifling atmosphere of tyranny. Lorenzo deliberately set himself to enfeeble the people by luxury, partly because he liked voluptuous living, partly because he aimed at popularity, and partly because it was his interest to enervate republican virtues. The arts used for the purposes of decoration in triumphs and carnival shows became the instruments of careless pleasure; and there is no doubt that even earnest painters lent their powers with no ill-will and no bad conscience to the service of lascivious patrons. 'Per la città, in diverse case, fece tondi di sua mano e femmine ignude assai,' says Vasari about Sandro Botticelli, who afterwards became a Piagnone and refused to touch a pencil.[1] We may, therefore, reasonably concede that if the Medici had never taken hold on Florence, or if the spirit of the times had made them other than they were in loftiness of aim and nobleness of heart, the arts of Italy in the Renaissance might have shown less of worldliness and materialism. It was against the demoralisation of society by paganism, as against the enslavement of Florence by her tyrants, that Savonarola strove; and since the Medici were the leaders of the classical revival, as well as the despots of the dying commonwealth, they justly bear the lion's share of that blame which fell in general upon the vices of their age denounced by the prophet of S. Marco. We may regard it either as a singular misfortune for Italy or as the strongest sign of deep-seated Italian corruption, that the most brilliant

[1] In many houses he painted roundels with his own hand, and of naked women plenty.

leaders of culture both at Florence and at Rome—Cosimo, Lorenzo, and Giovanni de' Medici—promoted rather than checked the debasing influences of the Renaissance, and added the weight of their authority to the popular craving for sensuous amusement.

Meanwhile, what was truly great and noble in Renaissance Italy, found its proper home in Florence; where the spirit of freedom, if only as an idea, still ruled; where the populace was still capable of being stirred to super-sensual enthusiasm; and where the flame of the modern intellect burned with its purest, whitest lustre.

CHAPTER VI

PAINTING

Two Periods in the True Renaissance — Andrea Mantegna — His Statuesque Design—His Naturalism—Roman Inspiration—Triumph of Julius Cæsar—Bas-reliefs—Luca Signorelli—The Precursor of Michael Angelo—Anatomical Studies—Sense of Beauty—The Chapel of S. Brizio at Orvieto—Its Arabesques and Medallions—Degrees in his Ideal—Enthusiasm for Organic Life—Mode of treating Classical Subjects—Perugino—His Pietistic Style—His Formalism—The Psychological Problem of his Life—Perugino's pupils—Pinturicchio —At Spello and Siena—Francia—Fra Bartolommeo—Transition to the Golden Age—Lionardo da Vinci—The Magician of the Renaissance — Raphael — The Melodist—Correggio — The Faun— Michael Angelo—The Prophet.

The Renaissance, so far as Painting is concerned, may be said to have culminated between the years 1470 and 1550. These dates, it must be frankly admitted, are arbitrary; nor is there anything more unprofitable than the attempt to define by strict chronology the moments of an intellectual growth so complex, so unequally progressive, and so varied as that of Italian art. All that the historian can hope to do, is to strike a mean between his reckoning of years and his more subtle calculations based on the emergence of decisive genius in special men. An instance of such compromise is afforded by Lionardo da Vinci, who belongs, as far as dates go, to the last half of the fifteenth century, but who must, on any estimate of his achievement, be classed with Michael Angelo among the final and supreme masters of the full Renaissance. To violate the order of time, with a view to what may here

be called the morphology of Italian art, is, in his case, a plain duty.

Bearing this in mind, it is still possible to regard the eighty years above mentioned as a period no longer of promise and preparation but of fulfilment and accomplishment. Furthermore, the thirty years at the close of the fifteenth century may be taken as one epoch in this climax of the art, while the first half of the sixteenth forms a second. Within the former falls the best work of Mantegna, Perugino, Francia, the Bellini, Signorelli, Fra Bartolommeo. To the latter we may reckon Michael Angelo, Raphael, Giorgione, Correggio, Titian, and Andrea del Sarto. Lionardo da Vinci, though belonging chronologically to the former epoch, ranks first among the masters of the latter; and to this also may be given Tintoretto, though his life extended far beyond it to the last years of the century. We thus obtain, within the period of eighty years from 1470 to 1550, two subordinate divisions of time, the one including the last part of the fifteenth century, the other extending over the best years of the sixteenth.

The subdivisions I have just suggested correspond to two distinct stages in the evolution of art. The painters of the earlier group win our admiration quite as much by their aim as by their achievement. Their achievement, indeed, is not so perfect but that they still make some demand upon interpretative sympathy in the student. There is, besides, a sense of reserved strength in their work. We feel that their motives have not been developed to the utmost, that their inspiration is not exhausted; that it will be possible for their successors to advance beyond them on the same path, not realising more consummate excellence in special points, but combining divers qualities, and reaching absolute freedom.

The painters of the second group display mastery more

perfect, range of faculty more all-embracing. What they design they do; nature and art obey them equally; the resources placed at their command are employed with facile and unfettered exercise of power. The hand obedient to the brain is now so expert that nothing further is left to be desired in the expression of the artist's thought.[1] The student can only hope to penetrate the master's meaning. To imagine a step further in the same direction is impossible. The full flower of the Italian genius has been unfolded. Its message to the world in art has been delivered.

Chronology alone would not justify us in drawing these distinctions. What really separates the two groups is the different degree in which they severally absorbed the spirit and uttered the message of their age. In the former the Renaissance was still immature, in the latter it was perfected. Yet all these painters deserve in a true sense to be called its children. Their common object is art regarded as an independent function, and relieved from the bondage of technical impediments. In their work the liberty of the modern mind finds its first and noblest expression. They deal with familiar and time-honoured Christian motives reverently; but they use them at the same time for the exhibition of pure human beauty. Pagan influences yield them spirit-stirring inspiration; yet the antique models of style, which proved no less embarrassing to their successors than Saul's armour was to David, weigh lightly, like a magician's breast-plate, upon their heroic strength.

[1] 'La man che ubbedisce all' intelletto' is a phrase pregnant with meaning, used by Michael Angelo in one of his sonnets. See Guasti, *Le Rime di Michael Angelo*, p. 173. Michael Angelo's blunt criticism of Perugino, that he was *goffo*, a fool in art, and his rude speech to Francia's handsome son, that his father made better forms by night than day, sufficiently indicate the different aims pursued by the painters of the two periods distinguished above.

Andrea Mantegna was born near Padua in 1431. Vasari says that in his boyhood he herded cattle, and it is probable that he was the son of a small Lombard farmer. What led him to the study of the arts we do not know; but that his talents were precociously developed, is proved by his registration in 1441 upon the books of the painter's guild at Padua. He is there described as the adopted son of Squarcione. At the age of seventeen he signed a picture with his name. Studying the casts and drawings collected by Squarcione for his Paduan school, the young Mantegna found congenial exercise for his peculiar gifts.[1] His early frescoes in the Eremitani at Padua look as though they had been painted from statues or clay models, carefully selected for the grandeur of their forms, the nobility of their attitudes, and the complicated beauty of their drapery. The figures, arranged on different planes, are perfect in their perspective; the action is indicated by appropriate gestures, and the colouring, though faint and cold, is scientifically calculated. Yet not a man or woman in these wondrous compositions seems to live. Well provided with bone and muscle, they have neither blood nor anything suggestive of the breath of life within them. It is as though Mantegna had been called to paint a people turned to stone, arrested suddenly amid their various occupations,

[1] Though Mantegna seems to have owed all his training to Padua, it is impossible to regard him as what is called a Squarcionesque—one among the artistic hacks formed and employed by the Paduan *impresario* of third-rate painting. No other eagle like to him was reared in that nest. His greatness belonged to his own genius, assimilating from the meagre means of study within his reach those elements which enabled him to divine the spirit of the antique and to attempt its reproduction. In order to facilitate the explanation of the problem offered by his early command of style, it has been suggested with great show of reason that he received a strong impression from the work executed in bas-relief by Donatello for the church of S. Antonio at Padua. Thus Florentine influences helped to form even the original genius of this greatest of the Lombard masters.

and preserved for centuries from injury in some Egyptian solitude of dewless sand.

In spite of this unearthly immobility, the Paduan frescoes exercise a strange and potent spell. We feel ourselves beneath the sway of a gigantic genius, intent on solving the severest problems of his art in preparation for the portraiture of some high intellectual abstraction. It should also be observed that notwithstanding their frigidity and statuesque composure, the pictures of 'S. Andrew' and 'S. Christopher' in the chapel of the Eremitani reveal minute study of real objects. Transitory movements of the body are noted and transcribed with merciless precision; an Italian hillside, with its olive trees and winding ways and crown of turrets, forms the background of one scene; in another the drama is localised amid Renaissance architecture of the costliest style. Rustic types have been selected for the soldiers, and commonplace details, down to a patched jerkin or a broken shoe, bear witness to the patience and the observation of the master. But over all these things the glamour of Medusa's head has fallen, turning them to stone. We are clearly in the presence of a painter for whom the attractions of nature were subordinated to the fascinations of science—a man the very opposite, for instance, to Benozzo Gozzoli. If Mantegna had passed away in early manhood, like Masaccio, his fame would have been that of a cold and calculating genius labouring after an ideal unrealised except in its dry formal elements.

The truth is that Mantegna's inspiration was derived from the antique.[1] The beauty of classical bas-relief entered deep into his soul and ruled his imagination. In later life he spent his acquired wealth in forming a collection of Greek and Roman

[1] Vasari, vol. v. p. 163, may be consulted with regard to Mantegna's preference for the ideal of statuary when compared with natural beauty, as the model for a painter.

antiquities.[1] He was, moreover, the friend of students, eagerly absorbing the knowledge brought to light by Ciriac of Ancona, Flavio Biondo, and other antiquaries; and so completely did he assimilate the materials of scholarship, that the spirit of a Roman seemed to be re-incarnated in him. Thus, independently of his high value as a painter, he embodies for us in art that sincere passion for the ancient world which was the dominating intellectual impulse of his age.

The minute learning accumulated in the fifteenth century upon the subject of Roman military life found noble illustration in his frieze of 'Julius Cæsar's Triumph.'[2] Nor is this masterpiece a cold display of pedantry. The life we vainly look for in the frescoes of the Eremitani chapel may be found here—statuesque, indeed, in style, and stately in movement, but glowing with the spirit of revived antiquity. The processional pomp of legionaries bowed beneath their trophied arms, the monumental majesty of robed citizens, the gravity of stoled and veiled priests, the beauty of young slaves, and all the paraphernalia of spoils and wreaths and elephants and ensigns are massed together with the self-restraint of noble art subordinating pageantry to rules of lofty composition. What must the genius of the man have been who could move thus majestically beneath the weight of painfully accumulated

[1] See Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *History of Painting in North Italy*, vol. i. p. 334, for an account of his antiquarian researches in company with Felice Feliciano. His museum was so famous that in 1483 Lorenzo de' Medici, passing through Mantua from Venice, thought it worthy of a visit. In his old age Mantegna fell into pecuniary difficulties, and had to part with his collection. The forced sale of its chief ornament, a bust of Faustina, is said to have broken his heart. *Ib.* p. 415.

[2] Painted on canvas in tempera for the Marquis of Mantua, before 1488, looted by the Germans in 1630, sold to Charles I., resold by the Commonwealth, bought back by Charles II., and now exposed, much spoiled by time and change, but more by villainous repainting, on the walls of Hampton Court.

erudition, converting an antiquarian motive into a theme for melodies of line composed in the grave Dorian mood?

By no process can the classic purity of this bas-relief be better understood than by comparing the original with a transcript made by Rubens from a portion of the 'Triumph.'[1] The Flemish painter strives to add richness to the scene by Bacchanalian riot and the sensuality of imperial Rome. His elephants twist their trunks, and trumpet to the din of cymbals; negroes feed the flaming candelabra with scattered frankincense; the white oxen of Clitumnus are loaded with gaudy flowers, and the dancing maidens are dishevelled Mænads. But the rhythmic procession of Mantegna, modulated to the sound of flutes and soft recorders, carries our imagination back to the best days and strength of Rome. His priests and generals, captives and choric women, are as little Greek as they are modern. In them awakes to a new life the spirit-quelling energy of the republic. The painter's severe taste keeps out of sight the insolence and orgies of the empire; he conceives Rome as Shakspeare did in 'Coriolanus.'[2]

In compositions of this type, studied after bas-reliefs and friezes, Mantegna displayed a power that was unique. Those who have once seen his drawings for Judith with the head of Holofernes, and for Solomon judging between the two mothers, will never forget their sculpture. The lines are graven on our memory. When this marble master chose to be tragic, his intensity was terrible. The designs for a dead Christ carried to the tomb among the weeping Maries, concentrate within the briefest space the utmost agony; it is as though the very ecstasy of grief had been congealed and fixed for ever. What, again, he could produce of purely beautiful within the region

[1] An oil painting in the National Gallery.

[2] The so-called 'Triumph of Scipio' in the National Gallery seems to me in every respect feebler than the Hampton Court Cartoons.

of religious art, is shown by his 'Madonna of the Victory.'[1] No other painter has given to the soldier saints forms at once so heroic and so chivalrously tender.

With regard to the circumstances of Mantegna's biography, it may be said briefly that, though of humble birth, he spent the greater portion of his life at Court and in the service of princes. It was in 1456, after he had distinguished himself by the Paduan frescoes, that he first received an invitation from the Marquis Lodovico Gonzaga. Of this sovereign I have already had occasion to speak.[2] Reared by Vittorino da Feltre, to whom his father had committed almost unlimited authority, Lodovico had early learned to estimate the real advantages of culture. It was now his object to render his capital no less illustrious by art than by the residence of learned men. With this view he offered Mantegna a salary of fifteen ducats a month, together with lodging, corn, and fuel—provided the painter would place his talents at his service. Mantegna accepted the invitation; but numerous engagements prevented him from transferring his household from Padua to Mantua until the year 1460. From that date onwards to 1506, when he died, Mantegna remained attached to the Gonzaga family serving three Marquises in succession, and adorning their palaces, chapels, and country-seats with frescoes now, alas!

[1] The 'Madonna della Vittoria,' now in the Louvre Gallery, was painted to commemorate the achievements of Francesco Gonzaga in the battle of Fornovo. That Francesco, General of the Venetian troops, should have claimed that action, the eternal disgrace of Italian soldiery, for a victory, is one of the strongest signs of the depth to which the sense of military honour had sunk in Italy. But though the occasion of its painting was so mean, the impression made by this picture is too powerful to be described. It is in every detail grandiose: masculine energy being combined with incomparable grace, religious feeling with athletic dignity, and luxuriance of ornamentation with severe gravity of composition. It is worth comparing this portrait of Francesco Gonzaga with his bronze medal, just as Piero della Francesco's picture of Sigismondo Malatesta should be compared with Pisanello's medallion.

[2] Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, p. 212.

almost entirely ruined. The grants of land and presents he received in addition to his salary, enabled him to build a villa at Buscoldo, where he resided during the summer, as well as to erect a sumptuous mansion in the capital.

Between Mantua, Goito, and Buscoldo, Mantegna spent the last forty-six years of his life in continual employment, broken only by a short visit to Florence in 1466, and another to Bologna in 1472,[1] and by a longer residence in Rome between the years 1488 and 1490. During the latter period Innocent VIII. was Pope. He had built a chapel in the Belvedere of the Vatican, and wished the greatest painter of the day to decorate it. Therefore he wrote to Francesco, Marquis of Mantua, requesting that he might avail himself of Mantegna's skill. Francesco, though unwilling to part with his painter in ordinary, thought it unadvisable to disappoint the Pope. Accordingly he dubbed Mantegna knight, and sent him to Rome. The chapel painted in fresco for Innocent was ruthlessly destroyed by Pius VI.; and thus the world has lost one of Mantegna's masterpieces, executed while his genius was at its zenith. On his return to Mantua he finished the decorations of the Castello of the Gonzaghi, and completed his greatest surviving work, the 'Triumph of Julius Cæsar.'

By his wife, Nicolosia, the sister of Giovanni and Gentile Bellini, Mantegna had several children, one of whom, Francesco, adopted painting as a trade. The great artist was by temper arrogant and haughty; nor could he succeed in living peaceably with any of his neighbours. It appears that he spent habitually more money than he could well afford, freely indulging his taste for magnificence, and dis-

[1] Nothing is known about Mantegna's stay in Florence. He went to meet the Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga at Bologna. This Cardinal, a great amateur of music and connoisseur in relics of antiquity, came to Mantua in August, 1472, where the 'Orfeo' of Messer Angelo Poliziano was produced for his amusement.

bursing large sums in the purchase of curiosities. Long before his death his estate had been involved in debt; and after his decease, his sons were forced to sell the pictures in his studio for the payment of pressing creditors. He was buried in Alberti's church of S. Andrea at Mantua, in a chapel decorated at his own expense. Over the grave was placed a bronze bust, most noble in modelling and perfect in execution. The broad forehead with its deeply cloven furrows, the stern and piercing eyes, the large lips compressed with nervous energy, the massive nose, the strength of jaw and chin, and the superb clusters of the hair escaping from a laurel-wreath upon the royal head, are such as realise for us our notion of a Roman in the days of the Republic. Mantegna's own genius has inspired this masterpiece, which tradition assigns to the medallist Sperando Maglioli. Whoever wrought it, must have felt the incubation of the mighty painter's spirit, and have striven to express in bronze the character of his uncompromising art.

Of a different temperament, yet not wholly unlike Mantegna in a certain iron strength of artistic character, was Luca Signorelli, born about 1441 at Cortona. The supreme quality of Mantegna was studied purity of outline, severe and heightened style. As Landor is distinguished by concentration above all the English poets who have made trial of the classic Muse, so Mantegna holds a place apart among Italian painters because of his stern Roman self-control. Signorelli, on the contrary, made his mark by boldness, pushing experiment almost beyond the verge of truth, and approaching Michael Angelo in the hardihood of his endeavour to outdo nature. Vasari says of him, that 'even Michael Angelo imitated the manner of Luca, as every one can see;' and indeed Signorelli anticipated the greatest master of the sixteenth century, not only in his profound study of human anatomy, but also in his resolution to express high thought and tragic passion by pure

form, discarding all the minor charms of painting. Trained in the severe school of Piero della Francesca, he early learned to draw from the nude with boldness and accuracy; and to this point, too much neglected by his predecessors, he devoted the full powers of his maturity. Anatomy he practised, according to the custom of those days, in the graveyard or beneath the gibbet. There is a drawing by him in the Louvre of a stalwart man carrying upon his back the corpse of a youth. Both are naked. The motive seems to have been taken from some lazar-house. Life-long study of perspective in its application to the drawing of the figure, made the difficulties of foreshortening and the delineation of brusque attitude mere child's play to this audacious genius. The most rapid movement, the most perilous contortion of bodies falling through the air or flying, he depicted with hard, firmly-traced, unerring outline. If we dare to criticise the productions of a master so original and so accomplished, all we can say is that Signorelli revelled almost too wantonly in the display of hazardous posture, and that he sacrificed the passion of his theme to the display of science.[1] Yet his genius comprehended great and tragic subjects, and to him belongs the credit in an age of ornament and pedantry of having made the human body a language for the utterance of all that is most weighty in the thought of man.

A story is told by Vasari which brings Signorelli very close to our sympathy, and enables us to understand the fascination of pure form he felt so deeply. 'It is related of Luca that he had a son killed at Cortona, a youth of singular beauty in face and person, whom he had tenderly loved. In his grief the father caused the boy to be stripped naked, and with extra-

[1] That he could conceive a stern and tragic subject, with all the passion it required, is, however, proved not only by the frescoes at Orvieto, but also by the powerful oil-painting of the 'Crucifixion' at Borgo San Sepolcro.

ordinary constancy of soul, uttering no complaint and shedding no tear, he painted the portrait of his dead son, to the end that he might still be able, through the work of his own hand, to contemplate that which nature had given him, but which an adverse fortune had taken away.' So passionate and ardent, so convinced of the indissoluble bond between the soul he loved in life and its dead tenement of clay, and withal so iron-nerved and stout of will, it behoved that man to be, who undertook in the plenitude of his power, at the age of sixty, to paint upon the walls of the chapel of S. Brizio at Orvieto the images of Doomsday, Resurrection, Heaven, and Hell.[1]

It is a gloomy chapel in the Gothic cathedral of that forlorn

[1] This story has been used for verse in a way to heighten its romantic colouring. Such as the lines are, I subjoin them for the sake of their attempt to emphasize and illustrate Renaissance feeling:—

'Vasari tells that Luca Signorelli,
The morning star of Michael Angelo,
Had but one son, a youth of seventeen summers,
Who died. That day the master at his easel
Wielded the liberal brush wherewith he painted
At Orvieto, on the Duomo's walls,
Stern forms of Death and Heaven and Hell and Judgment
Then came they to him, cried: "Thy son is dead,
Slain in a duel: but the bloom of life
Yet lingers round red lips and downy cheek."
Luca spoke not, but listened. Next they bore
His dead son to the silent painting-room,
And left on tip-toe son and sire alone.
Still Luca spoke and groaned not; but he raised
The wonderful dead youth, and smoothed his hair,
Washed his red wounds, and laid him on a bed,
Naked and beautiful, where rosy curtains
Shed a soft glimmer of uncertain splendour
Life-like upon the marble limbs below.
Then Luca seized his palette: hour by hour
Silence was in the room; none durst approach:
Morn wore to noon, and noon to eve, when shyly
A little maid peeped in and saw the painter
Painting his dead son with unerring hand-stroke,
Firm and dry-eyed before the lordly canvas.'

Papal city—gloomy by reason of bad lighting, but more so because of the terrible shapes with which Signorelli has filled it.[1] In no other work of the Italian Renaissance, except in the Sistine Chapel, has so much thought, engaged upon the most momentous subjects, been expressed with greater force by means more simple and with effect more overwhelming. Architecture, landscape, and decorative accessories of every kind, the usual padding of *quattrocento* pictures, have been discarded from the main compositions. The painter has relied solely upon his power of imagining and delineating the human form in every attitude, and under the most various conditions. Darting like hawks or swallows through the air, huddling together to shun the outpoured vials of the wrath of God, writhing with demons on the floor of Hell, struggling into new life from the clinging clay, standing beneath the footstool of the Judge, floating with lute and viol on the winds of Paradise, kneeling in prayer, or clasping 'inseparable hands with joy and bliss in overmeasure for ever'—these multitudes of living beings, angelic, diabolic, bestial, human, crowd the huge spaces of the chapel walls. What makes the impression of controlling doom the more appalling, is that we comprehend the drama in its several scenes, while the chief actor, the divine Judge, at whose bidding the cherubs sound their clarions, and the dead arise, and weal and woe are portioned to the saved and damned, is Himself unrepresented.[2] We breathe in the presence of embodied consciences, submitting, like our own, to an unseen inevitable will.

It would be doing Signorelli injustice at Orvieto to study only these great panels. The details with which he has filled all the vacant spaces above the chapel stalls and round the

[1] See the article on Orvieto in my *Sketches in Italy and Greece*.

[2] The earlier frescoes of Fra Angelico, on the roof, depict Christ as Judge. But there is nothing in common with these works and Signorelli's.

doorway, throw new light upon his power. The ostensible motive for this elaborate ornamentation is contained in the portraits of six poets, who are probably Homer, Virgil, Lucan, Horace, Ovid, and Dante, *il sesto tra cotanto senno*.[1] But the portraits themselves, though vigorously conceived and remarkable for bold foreshortening, are the least part of the whole design. Its originality consists in the arabesques, medallions, and *chiaroscuro* bas-reliefs, where the human form, treated as absolutely plastic, supplies the sole decorative element. The pilasters by the doorway, for example, are composed, after the usual type of Italian *grotteschi*, in imitation of antique candelabra, with numerous stages for the exhibition of the artist's fancies. Unlike the work of Raphael in the Loggie, these pilasters of Signorelli show no birds or beasts, no flowers or foliage, fruits or fauns, no masks or sphinxes. They are crowded with naked men—drinking, dancing, leaning forward, twisting themselves into strange attitudes, and adapting their bodies to the several degrees of the framework. The same may be said of the arabesques around the portraits of the poets, where men, women, and children, some complete, some ending in foliage or in fish-tails, are lavished with a wild and terrible profusion. Hippogriffs and centaurs, sirens and dolphins, are here used as adjuncts to humanity. Amid this fantastic labyrinth of twisted forms we find medallions painted in *chiaroscuro* with subjects taken chiefly from Ovidian

[1] This is the conjecture of Signor Luzi (*Il Duomo di Orvieto*, p. 168). He bases it upon the Dantesque subjects illustrated, and quotes from the 'Inferno':—

'Omero poeta sovrano;
L' altro è Orazio satiro che viene,
Ovidio è il terzo, e l' ultimo Lucano.'

Nothing is more marked or more deeply interesting than the influence exercised by Dante over Signorelli, an influence he shared with Giotto, Orcagna, Botticelli, Michael Angelo, the greatest imaginative painters of Central Italy.

and Dantesque mythology. Here every attitude of men in combat and in motion has been studied from the nude, and multitudes of figures draped and undraped are compressed into the briefest compass. All but the human form is sternly eliminated; and the body itself is treated with a mastery and a boldness that prove Signorelli to have held its varied capabilities firmly in his brain. He could not have worked out all those postures from the living model. He played freely with his immense stores of knowledge; but his play was the pastime of a Prometheus. Each pose, however hazardous, carries conviction with it of sincerity and truth; the life and liberty of nature reign throughout. From the whole maze of interlaced and wrestling figures the terrible nature of the artist's genius shines forth. They are almost all strong men in the prime or past the prime of life, chosen for their salient display of vital structure. Signorelli was the first, and, with the exception of Michael Angelo, the last painter thus to use the body, without sentiment, without voluptuousness, without any second intention whatsoever, as the supreme decorative principle. In his absolute sincerity he made, as it were, a parade of hard and rugged types, scorning to introduce an element of beauty, whether sensuous or ideal, that should distract him from the study of the body in and for itself. This distinguishes him in the arabesques at Orvieto alike from Mantegna and Michael Angelo, from Correggio and Raphael, from Titian and Paolo Veronese.

This point is so important for its bearing on Renaissance art that I may be permitted to dilate at greater length on Signorelli's choice of types and treatment of form in general. Having a special predilection for the human body, he by no means confined himself to monotony in its presentation. On the contrary, we can trace many distinct grades of corporeal expression. First comes the abstract nude, illustrated by the

'Resurrection' and the arabesques at Orvieto.[1] Contemporary life, with all its pomp of costume and insolence of ruffling youth, is depicted in the 'Fulminati' at Orvieto and in the 'Soldiers of Totila' at Monte Oliveto.[2] These transcripts from the courts of princes and camps of condottieri are invaluable as portraits of the lawless young men who filled Italy with the noise of their feuds and the violence of their adventures. They illustrate Matarazzo's Perugian chronicle better than any other Renaissance pictures; for in frescoes like those of Pinturicchio at Siena the same qualities are softened to suit the painter's predetermined harmony, whereas Signorelli rejoices in their pure untempered character.[3] These, then, form a second stage. Third in degree we find the type of highly idealised adolescence reserved by Signorelli for his angels. All his science and his sympathy with real life are here subordinated to poetic feeling. It is a mistake to say that these angels are the young men of Umbria whom he loved to paint in their striped jackets, with the addition of wings to their shoulders. The radiant beings who tune their citherns on the clouds of Paradise, or scatter roses for elect souls, could not live and breathe in the fiery atmosphere of sensuous passions to which the Baglioni were habituated. A grave and solemn sense of beauty animates these fair male beings, clothed in voluminous drapery, with youthful faces and still earnest eyes. Their melody, like that of Milton, is severe. Nor are Signorelli's angelic beings of one uniform type like the angels of Fra Angelico. The athletic cherubs of

[1] The background to the circular 'Madonna' in the Uffizzi, the 'Flagellation of Christ' in the Academy at Florence and in the Brera at Milan, and the 'Adam' at Cortona, belong to this grade.

[2] We may add the pages in a predella representing the 'Adoration of the Magi' in the Uffizzi.

[3] Vasari mentions the portraits of Nicolo, Paolo, and Vitellozzo Vitelli, Gian Paolo, and Orazio Baglioni, among others, in the frescoes at Orvieto.

the 'Resurrection,' breathing their whole strength into the trumpets that awake the dead; the mailed and winged warriors, keeping guard above the pit of 'Hell,' that none may break their prison-bars among the damned; the lute-players of 'Paradise,' with their almost feminine sobriety of movement; the flame-breathing seraphs of the day of doom; the 'Gabriel' of Volterra, in whom strength is translated into swiftness:—these are the heralds, sentinels, musicians, executioners, and messengers of the celestial court; and each class is distinguished by appropriate physical characteristics. At the other end of the scale, forming a fourth grade, we may mention the depraved types of humanity chosen for his demons—those greenish, reddish, ochreish fiends of the 'Inferno,' whom Signorelli created by exaggerating the more grotesque qualities of the nude developed in his arabesques. We thus obtain four several degrees of form: the demoniac, the abstract nude, the adolescent beauty of young men copied from choice models, and the angelic.

Except in his angels, Signorelli was comparatively indifferent to what is commonly considered beauty. He was not careful to select his models, or to idealise their type. The naked human body, apart from facial distinction or refinement of form, contented him. Violent contrasts of light and shadow, accentuating the anatomical structure with rough and angular decision, give the effect of illustrative diagrams to his studies. Harmony of proportion and the magic of expression are sacrificed to energy emergent in a powerful physique. Redundant life, in sinewy limbs, in the proud carriage of the head upon the neck, in the sway of the trunk backward from the reins, the firmly planted calves and brawny thighs, the thick hair, broad shoulders, spare flanks, and massive gluteal muscles of a man of twenty-two or upwards, whose growth has been confined to the development of animal force, was what delighted him. Yet there is no coarseness or

animalism properly so called in his style. He was attracted by the marvellous mechanism of the human frame—its goodliness regarded as the most highly organised of animate existences.

Owing, perhaps, to this exclusive predilection for organic life, Signorelli was not great as a colourist. His patches of blues and reds in the frescoes of Monte Oliveto are oppressively distinct; his use of dull brown for the shading of flesh imparts a disagreeable heaviness to his best modelled forms; nor did he often attain in his oil pictures to that grave harmony we admire in his 'Last Supper' at Cortona. The world of light and colour was to him a comparatively untravelled land. It remained for other artists to raise these elements of pictorial expression to the height reached by Signorelli in his treatment of the nude.

Before quitting the frescoes at Orvieto, some attention should be paid to the medallions spoken of above, in special relation to the classicism of the earlier Renaissance. Scenes from Dante's 'Purgatorio' and subjects from the 'Metamorphoses' of Ovid are treated here in the same key; but the latter, since they engaged Signorelli's fancy upon Greek mythology, are the more important for our purpose. Two from the legend of 'Orpheus' and two from that of 'Proserpine' might be chosen as typical of the whole series. Mediæval intensity, curiously at variance with antique feeling, is discernible throughout. The satellites of Hades are gaunt and sinewy devils, eager to do violence to Eurydice. Pluto himself drives his jarring car-wheels up through the lava-blocks and flames of Etna with a fury and a vehemence we seek in vain upon antique sarcophagi. Ceres, wandering through Sicily in search of her lost daughter, is a gaunt witch with dishevelled hair, raising frantic hands to tear her cheeks; while the snakes that draw her chariot are no grave symbols of the germinating corn, but greedy serpents ready

to spit fire against the ravishers of Proserpine. Thus the tranquillity and self-restraint of Greek art yield to a passionate and trenchant realisation of the actual romance. The most thrilling moments in the legend are selected for dramatic treatment, grace and beauty being exchanged for vivid presentation. A whole cycle of human experience separates these medallions from the antique bas-relief at Naples, where Hermes hands the veiled Eurydice to Orpheus, and all three are calm. That Signorelli, if he chose to do so, could represent a classic myth with more of classic feeling, is shown by his picture of 'Pan Listening to Olympus.'[1] The nymph, the vineleaf-girdled Faun, and the two shepherds, all undraped and drawn with subtle feeling for the melodies of line, render this work one of his most successful compositions.

It would be interesting to compare Signorelli's treatment of the antique with Mantegna's or Botticelli's. The visions of the pagan world, floating before the mind of all men in the fifteenth century, found very different interpreters in these three painters—Botticelli adding the quaint alloy of his own fancy, Signorelli imparting the semi-savagery of a terrible imagination, Mantegna, with the truest instinct and the firmest touch, confining himself to the processional pageantry of bas-relief. Yet, were this comparison to be instituted, we could hardly refrain from carrying it much further. Each great master of the Renaissance had his own relation to classical mythology. The mystic sympathies of 'Leda and the Swan,' as imaged severally by Lionardo and Michael Angelo; Correggio's romantic handling of the myths of 'Danaë' and 'Io;' Titian's and Tintoretto's rival pictures of 'Bacchus and Ariadne;' Raphael's 'Galatea;' Pollajuolo's 'Hercules;' the 'Europa' of Veronese; the 'Circe' of Dosso

[1] Painted for Lorenzo de' Medici. It is now in the Berlin Museum through the neglect of the National Gallery authorities to purchase it for England.

Dossi; Palma's 'Venus;' Sodoma's 'Marriage of Alexander' —all these, to mention none but pictures familiar to every traveller in Italy, raise for the student of the classical Revival absorbing questions relative to the influences of pagan myths upon the modern imagination.

Signorelli was chiefly occupied, during the course of his long career, upon religious pictures; and the high place he occupies in the history of Renaissance culture is due partly to his free abandonment of conventional methods in treating sacred subjects. The Uffizzi Gallery contains a circular 'Madonna' by his hand, with a row of naked men for background—the forerunner of Michael Angelo's famous 'Holy Family.' So far had art for art's sake already encroached upon the ecclesiastical domain. To discuss Signorelli's merits as a painter of altarpieces would be to extend the space allotted to him far beyond its proper limits. It is not as a religious artist that he takes his rank, but as having powerfully promoted the rehabilitation of the body achieved for art by the Renaissance.

Unlike Mantegna, Signorelli never entered the service of a prince, though we have seen that he executed commissions for Lorenzo de' Medici and Pandolfo Petrucci. He bore a name which, if not noble, had been more than once distinguished in the annals of Tuscany. Residing at his native place, Cortona, he there enjoyed the highest reputation, and was frequently elected to municipal office. Concerning his domestic life very little is known, but what we do know is derived from an excellent source.[1] His mother was the

[1] I must not omit to qualify Vasari's praise of Luca Signorelli, by reference to a letter recently published from the *Archivio Buonarroti*, *Lettere a Diversi*, p. 391. Michael Angelo there addresses the Captain of Cortona, and complains that in the first year of Leo's pontificate Luca came to him and by various representations obtained from him the sum of eighty Giulios, which he never repaid, although he made profession to have done so. Michael Angelo was ill at the time, and

sister of Lazzaro, great-grandfather of Giorgio Vasari. In his biography of Signorelli, Vasari relates how, when he was himself a boy of eight, his illustrious cousin visited the house of the Vasari family at Arezzo; and hearing from little Giorgio's grammar-master that he spent his time in drawing figures, Luca turned to the child's father and said, 'Antonio, since Giorgio takes after his family, you must by all means have him taught; for even though he should pay attention to literature as well, drawing cannot fail to be a source of utility, honour, and recreation to him, as it is to every man of worth.' Luca's kindness deeply impressed the boy, who afterwards wrote the following description of his personal qualities: 'He was a man of the most excellent habits, sincere and affectionate with his friends, sweet of conversation and amusing in society, above all things courteous to those who had need of his work, and easy in giving instruction to his pupils. He lived splendidly, and took delight in dressing handsomely. This excellent disposition caused him to be always held in highest veneration both in his own city and abroad.'

To turn from Signorelli to Perugino is to plunge at once into a very different atmosphere.[1] It is like quitting the rugged gorges of high mountains for a valley of the Southern Alps—still, pensive, beautiful, and coloured with reflections from an evening sky. Perugino knew exactly how to represent a certain mood of religious sentiment, blending meek acquiescence with a prayerful yearning of the impassioned

working with much difficulty on a statue of a bound captive for the tomb of Julius. Luca gave a specimen of his renowned courtesy by comforting the sculptor in these rather sanctimonious phrases: 'Doubt not that angels will come from heaven, to support your arms and help you.'

[1] Pietro, known as Perugino from the city of his adoption, was the son of Cristoforo Vannucci, of Città della Pieve. He was born in 1446, and died at Fontignano in 1522.

soul. His Madonnas worshipping the infant Jesus in a tranquil Umbrian landscape, his angels ministrant, his pathetic martyrs with upturned holy faces, his sexless S. Sebastians and immaculate S. Michaels, display the perfection of art able by colour and by form to achieve within a narrow range what it desires. What this artist seems to have aimed at, was to create for the soul amid the pomps and passions of this world a resting-place of contemplation tenanted by saintly and seraphic beings. No pain comes near the folk of his celestial city; no longing poisons their repose; they are not weary, and the wicked trouble them no more. Their cheerfulness is no less perfect than their serenity; like the shades of Hellas, they have drunk Lethean waters from the river of content, and all remembrance of things sad or harsh has vanished from their minds. The quietude of holiness expressed in this ideal region was a legacy to Perugino from earlier Umbrian masters; but his technical supremacy in fresco-painting and in oils, his correct drawing within certain limits, and his refined sense of colour enabled him to realise it more completely than his less accomplished predecessors. In his best work the Renaissance set the seal of absolute perfection upon pietistic art.

We English are fortunate in possessing one of Perugino's sincerest devotional oil pictures.[1] His frescoes of 'S. Sebastian' at Panicale, and of the 'Crucifixion' at Florence, are tolerably well known through reproductions;[2] while the 'Vision of S. Bernard' at Munich and the 'Pietà' in the Pitti Gallery are familiar to all travelled students of Italian painting. These masterpieces belong to Perugino's best period, when his inspiration was fresh, and his enthusiasm for artistic excellence was still unimpaired; and when, as M. Rio thinks, the failure of his faith had not yet happened. It is only at

[1] The triptych in the National Gallery.

[2] They have been published by the Arundel Society.

Perugia, however, in the Sala del Cambio, that we are able to gauge the extent of his power and to estimate the value of his achievement beyond the pale of strictly religious themes.

Early in the course of his career Perugino seems to have become contented with a formal repetition of successful motives, and to have checked the growth of his genius by adhering closely to a prescribed cycle of effects. The praises of his patrons and the prosperity of his trade proved to his keen commercial sense that the raised ecstatic eyes, the upturned oval faces, the pale olive skin, the head inclined upon the shoulder, the thin fluttering hair, the ribands and the dainty dresses of his holy persons found great favour in Umbrian palaces and convents. Thenceforward he painted but little else; and when, in the Sala del Cambio, he was obliged to treat the representative heroes of Greek and Roman story, he adopted the same manner.[1] Leonidas, the lion-hearted Spartan, and Cato, the austere Roman, who preferred liberty to life, bend their mild heads like flowers in Perugino's frescoes, and gather up their drapery in studied folds with celestial delicacy. Jove is a reproduction of the Eterno Padre, conceived as a benevolent old man for a conventional painting of the 'Trinity;' and Ganymede is a page-boy with the sweet submissive features of Tobias. Already Perugino had opened a manufactory of pietistic pictures, and was employing many pupils on his works. He coined money by fixing artificially beautiful faces upon artificially elegant figures, placing a row of these puppets in a landscape with calm sky behind them, and calling the composition by the name of some familiar scene. His inspiration was dead, his invention exhausted; his chief object seemed to be to make his trade thrive.

[1] These frescoes were begun in 1499. It may be mentioned that in this year, on the refusal of Perugino to decorate the Cappella di S. Brizio, the Orvietans entrusted that work to Signorelli.

Perugino will always remain a problem to the psychologist who believes in physiognomy, as well as to the student of the passionate times in which he lived. His hard unsympathetic features in the portraits at Perugia and Florence do not belie, but rather win credence for Vasari's tales about his sordid soul.[1] Local traditions and contemporary rumours, again, give colour to what Vasari relates about his infidelity; while the criminal records of Florence prove that he was not over-scrupulous to keep his hands from violence.[2] How could such a man, we ask ourselves, have endured to pass a long life in the fabrication of devotional pictures? Whence did he derive the sentiment of masterpieces, for piety only equalled by those of Fra Angelico, either in his own nature or in the society of a city torn to pieces by the factions of the Baglioni? How, again, was it possible for an artist who at times touched beauty so ideal, to be contented with the stencilling by his pupils of conventional figures on canvases to which he gave his name? Taking these questions separately, we might reply that 'there is no art to find the mind's construction in the face;' that painting in the sixteenth century was a trade regulated by the demand

[1] Uffizzi and Sala del Cambio.

[2] 'Fu Pietro persona di assai poca religione, e non se gli potè mai far credere l'immortalità dell' anima: anzi, con parole, accomodate al suo cervello di porfido, ostinatissimamente ricusò ogni buona vita. Aveva ogni sua speranza ne' beni della fortuna, e per danari arebbe fatto ogni male contratto.' Vasari, vol. vi. p. 50. The local tradition alluded to above relates to the difficulties raised by the Church against the Christian burial of Perugino: but if he died of plague, as it is believed (see C. and C., vol. iii. p. 244), these difficulties were probably caused by panic rather than belief in his impiety. For Gasparo Celio's note on Perugino's refusal to confess upon his death-bed, saying that he preferred to see how an impenitent soul would fare in the other world, the reader may consult Rio's *L'Art Chrétien*, vol. ii. p. 269. The record of Perugino's arming himself in Dec. 1486, together with a notorious assassin, Aulista di Angelo of Perugia, in order to waylay and beat a private enemy of his near S. Pietro Maggiore at Florence is quoted by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. iii. p. 183.

for particular wares; that men can live among ruffians without sharing their mood; that the artist and the moral being are separate, and may not be used to interpret each other. Yet, after giving due weight to such answers, Perugino, being what he was, living at the time he did, not as a recluse, but as a prosperous *impresario* of painting, and systematically devoting his powers to pietistic art, must be for us a puzzle. That the quietism of his highly artificial style should have been fashionable in Perugia, while the Baglioni were tearing each other to pieces, and the troops of the Vitelli and the Borgia were trampling upon Umbria, is one of the most striking paradoxes of an age rich in dramatic contradictions.

It is much to be regretted, with a view to solving the question of Perugino's personality in relation to his art, that his character does not emerge with any salience from the meagre notices we have received concerning him, and that we know but little of his private life. Vasari tells us that he married a very beautiful girl, and that one of his chief pleasures was to see this wife handsomely dressed at home and abroad. He often decked her out in clothes and jewels with his own hand. For the rest, we find in Perugino, far more than in either Mantegna or Signorelli, an instance of the simple Italian craftsman, employing numerous assistants, undertaking contract work on a large scale, and striking keen bargains with his employers. Both at Florence and at Perugia he opened a *bottega*; and by the exercise of his trade as a master-painter, he realised enough money to buy substantial estates in those cities, as well as in his birthplace.[1] In all the greatest artworks of the age he took his part. Thus we find him painting in the Sistine Chapel between 1484 and 1486, treating with the commune of Orvieto for the completion of the

[1] 'Guadagnò molte ricchezze; e in Fiorenza murò e comprò case; ed in Perugia ed a Castello della Pieve acquistò molti beni stabili.' Vasari, vol. vi. p. 50.

chapel of S. Brizio in 1489, joining in the debate upon the façade of S. Maria del Fiore in 1491, giving his opinion upon the erection of Michael Angelo's 'David' at Florence in 1504, and competing with Signorelli, Pinturicchio, and Bazzi for the decoration of the Stanze of the Vatican in 1508. The rising of brighter stars above the horizon during his life-time somewhat dimmed his fame, and caused him much disquietude; yet neither Raphael nor Michael Angelo interfered with the demand for his pictures, which continued to be lively till the very year of his death. That he was jealous of these younger rivals, appears from the fact that he brought an action against Michael Angelo for having called his style stupid and antiquated. In the celebrated phrase cast at him by the blunt and scornful master of a new art-mystery,[1] we discern the abrupt line of division between time-honoured tradition and the *maniera moderna* of the full Renaissance. The old Titans had to yield their place before the new Olympian deities of Italian painting. There is something pathetic in the retirement of the grey-haired Perugino from Rome, to make way for the victorious Phœbean beauty of the boy Raphael.

The influence of Perugino upon Italian art was powerful though transitory. He formed a band of able pupils, among whom was the great Raphael; and though Raphael speedily abandoned his master's narrow footpath through the fields of painting, he owed to Perugino the invaluable benefit of training in solid technical methods and traditions of pure taste. From none of his elder contemporaries, with the exception of Fra Bartolommeo, could the young Raphael have learnt so much that was congenial to his early instincts. What, for example, might have befallen him if he had worked with Signorelli, it is difficult to imagine; for while nothing is more obvious on the one hand than Raphael's originality, his strong assimilative bias is scarcely less remarkable. The time has not yet come to

[1] 'Goffo nell' arte.' See Vasari, vol. vi. p. 46. See too above, p. 196.

speak of Raphael; nor will space suffice for detailed observations on his fellow-students in the workshop at Perugia. The place occupied by Perugino in the evolution of Italian painting is peculiar. In the middle of a positive and worldly age, declining fast to frigid scepticism and political corruption, he set the final touch of technical art upon the devotion transmitted from earlier and more enthusiastic centuries. The flower of Umbrian piety blossomed in the masterpieces of his youth, and faded into dryness in the affectations of his manhood. Nothing was left on the same line for his successors.

Among these, Bernardo Pinturicchio can here alone be mentioned. A thorough naturalist, though saturated with the mannerism of the Umbrian school, Pinturicchio was not distracted either by scientific or ideal aims from the clear and fluent presentation of contemporary manners and costumes. He is a kind of Umbrian Gozzoli, who brings us here and there in close relation to the men of his own time, and has in consequence a special value for the student of Renaissance life. His wall-paintings in the library of the cathedral of Siena are so well preserved that we need not seek elsewhere for better specimens of the decorative art most highly prized in the first years of the sixteenth century.[1] These frescoes have a richness of effect and a vivacity of natural action, which, in spite of their superficiality, render them highly charming. The life of Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, Pius II., is here treated like a legend. There is no attempt at representing the dress of half a century anterior to the painter's date, or at rendering accurate historic portraiture. Both Pope and Emperor are romantically conceived, and each portion of the tale is told as though it were a fit in some popular ballad. So much remains of Perugian affectation as gives a kind of childlike grace to

[1] I select these for comment rather than the frescoes at Spello, beautiful as these are, because they have more interest in relation to the style of the Renaissance.

the studied attitudes and many-coloured groups of elegant young men.

We must always be careful to distinguish the importance of an artist considered as the exponent of his age from that which he may claim by virtue of some special skill or some peculiar quality of feeling. The art of Perugino, for example, throws but little light upon the Renaissance taken as a whole. Intrinsically valuable because of its technical perfection and its purity of sentiment, it was already in the painter's lifetime superseded by a larger and a grander manner. The progressive forces of the modern style found their channels outside him. This again is true of Francesco Raibolini, surnamed Francia from his master in the goldsmith's craft. Francia is known to Englishmen as one of the most sincerely pious of Christian painters by his incomparable picture of the 'Dead Christ' in our National Gallery. The spirituality that renders Fra Angelico unintelligible to minds less ecstatically tempered than his own, is not found in such excess in Francia, nor does his work suffer from the insipidity of Perugino's affectation. Deep religious feeling is combined with physical beauty of the purest type in a masterpiece of tranquil grace. A greater degree of *naïveté* and naturalness compensates for the inferiority of Francia's to Perugino's supremely perfect handling. This is true of Francia's numerous pictures at Bologna; where indeed, in order to be rightly known, he should be studied by all lovers of the *quattrocento* style in its most delightful moments.[1] For mastery over oil painting and for charm of colour Francia challenges comparison with what is best in Perugino, though he did not quite attain the same technical excellence.

One more painter must delay us yet awhile within the limits of the fifteenth century. Bartolommeo di Paolo del

[1] The 'Assumption' in S. Frediano at Lucca should also be mentioned as one of Francia's masterpieces.

Fattorino, better known as Baccio della Porta or Fra Bartolommeo, forms at Florence the connecting link between the artists of the earlier Renaissance and the golden age.[1] By chronological reckoning he is nearly a quarter of a century later than Lionardo da Vinci, and is the exact contemporary of Michael Angelo. As an artist, he has thoroughly outgrown the *quattrocento* style, and falls short only by a little of the greatest. In assigning him a place among the predecessors and precursors of the full Renaissance, I am therefore influenced rather by the range of subjects he selected, and by the character of his genius, than by calculations of time or estimate of ability.

Fra Bartolommeo was sent, when nine years old, into the workshop of Cosimo Rosselli, where he began his artist's life by colour-grinding, sweeping out the shop, and errand-running. It was in Cosimo's *bottega* that he made acquaintance with Mariotto Albertinelli, who became his intimate friend and fellow-worker. In spite of marked differences of character, disagreements upon the fundamental matters of politics and religion, and not unfrequent quarrels, these men continued to be comrades through the better part of their joint lives. Baccio was gentle, timid, yielding, and industrious. Mariotto was wilful, obstinate, inconsequent, and flighty. Baccio fell under the influence of Savonarola, professed himself a *piagnone*, and took the cowl of the Dominicans.[2] Mariotto was a partisan of the Medici, an uproarious *pallesco*, and a loose liver, who eventually deserted the art of painting for the calling of an innkeeper. Yet so sweet was the temper of the Frate, and so firm was the bond of friendship established in boyhood between this ill-assorted couple, that they did not

[1] His father was a muleteer of Suffignano, who settled at Florence, in a house and garden near the gate of S. Piero Gattolino. He was born in 1475, and he died in 1517.

[2] In S. Domenico at Prato in 1500. He afterwards resided in S. Marco at Florence.

part company until 1512, three years before Mariotto's death and five before that of Bartolommeo. During their long association the task of designing fell upon the Frate, while Albertinelli took his orders and helped to work out his conceptions. Both were excellent craftsmen and consummate colourists, as is proved by the pictures executed by each unassisted. Albertinelli's 'Salutation' in the Uffizzi yields no point of grace and vigour to any of his more distinguished coadjutor's paintings.

The great contributions made by Fra Bartolommeo to the art of Italy were in the double region of composition and colouring. In his justly celebrated fresco of S. Maria Nuova at Florence—a 'Last Judgment' with a Christ enthroned amid a choir of Saints—he exhibited for the first time a thoroughly scientific scheme of grouping based on geometrical principles. Each part is perfectly balanced in itself, and yet is necessary to the structure of the whole. The complex framework may be subdivided into numerous sections no less harmoniously ordered than is the total scheme to which they are subordinated. Simple figures—the pyramid and the triangle, upright, inverted, and interwoven like the rhymes in a sonnet—form the basis of the composition. This system was adhered to by the Frate in all his subsequent works. To what extent it influenced the style of Raphael, will be afterwards discussed. As a colourist, Fra Bartolommeo was equal to the best of his contemporaries, and superior to any of his rivals in the school of Florence. Few painters of any age have combined harmony of tone so perfectly with brilliance and richness. It is a real joy to contemplate the pure and splendid folds of the white drapery he loved to place in the foreground of his altar-pieces. Solidity and sincerity distinguish his work in every detail, while his feeling is remarkable for elevation and sobriety. All that he lacks, is the boldness of imagination, the depth

of passion, and the power of thought, that are indispensable to genius of the highest order. Gifted with a sympathetic and a pliant, rather than a creative and self-sustained nature, he was sensitive to every influence. Therefore we find him learning much in his youth from Lionardo, deriving a fresh impulse from Raphael, and endeavouring in his later life, after a visit to Rome in 1514, to 'heighten his style,' as the phrase went, by emulating Michael Angelo. The attempt to tread the path of Buonarroti was a failure. What Fra Bartolommeo sought to gain in majesty, he lost in charm. His was essentially a pure and gracious manner, upon which sublimity could not be grafted. The gentle soul, who dropped his weapon when the convent of S. Marco was besieged by the Compagnacci,[1] and who vowed, if heaven preserved him in the tumult, to become a monk, had none of Michael Angelo's *terribilità*. Without possessing some share of that spirit, it was vain to aggrandise the forms and mass the raiment of his prophets in imitation of the Sistine.

Nature made Fra Bartolommeo the painter of adoration.[2] His masterpiece at Lucca—the 'Madonna della Misericordia' —is a poem of glad worship, a hymn of prayerful praise. Our Lady stands elate, between earth and heaven, appealing to her Son for mercy. At her footstool are her suppliants, the men and women and little children of the city she has saved. The peril is past. Salvation has been won; and the song of thanksgiving ascends from all those massed and mingled forms in unison. Not less truly is the great unfinished picture of 'Madonna surrounded by the Patron Saints of Florence' a poem of adoration.[3] This painting was ordered by the Gonfalonier Piero Soderini, the man who

[1] May 23, 1498.

[2] In addition to the pictures mentioned above, I may call attention to the adoring figure of S. Catherine of Siena, in three large paintings—now severally in the Pitti, at Lucca, and in the Louvre.

[3] In the Uffizzi. As a composition, it is the Frate's masterpiece.

dedicated Florence to Christ as King. He intended it to take its place in the hall of the Consiglio Grande, where Michael Angelo and Lionardo gained their earliest laurels. Before it could be finished, the Republic perished.[1] 'That,' says Rio, 'is the reason why he left but an imperfect work—for those at least who are only struck by what is wanting in it. Others will at first regard it with the interest attaching to unfinished poems, interrupted by the jailer's call or by the stern voice of the executioner. Then they will study it in all its details, in order to appreciate its beauties; and that appreciation will be the more perfect in proportion as a man is the more fully penetrated with its dominant idea, and with the attendant circumstances that bring this home to him. It is not against an abstract enemy that the intercession of the celestial powers is here invoked: it is not by a caprice of the painter or his patron that, in the group of central figures, S. Anne attracts attention before the Holy Virgin, not only by reason of her pre-eminence, but also through the intensity of her heaven-ward prayer, and again through her beauty, which far surpasses that of nearly all "Madonnas" painted by Fra Bartolommeo.'[2] But artist and patron had indeed good reason, in this crisis of the Commonwealth, to select as the most eminent advocate for Florence at the bar of Heaven that saint, on whose day, July 26, 1343, had been celebrated the emancipation of the city from its servitude to Walter of Brienne.

The great event of Fra Bartolommeo's life was the impression produced on him by Savonarola.[3] Having

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 487, for this consequence of the sack of Prato.

[2] *L'Art Chrétien*, vol. ii. p. 515.

[3] Two of our best portraits of Savonarola, the earlier inscribed 'Hieronymi Ferrariensis a Deo Missi Prophetæ Effigies,' the later treated to represent S. Peter Martyr, are from the hand of Fra Bartolommeo. See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, vol. iii. p. 433.

listened to the Dominican's terrific denunciations of worldliness and immorality, he carried his life studies to the pyre of vanities, resolved to assume the cowl, and renounced his art. Between 1499, when he was engaged in painting the 'Last Judgment' of S. Maria Nuova, and 1506, he is supposed never to have touched the pencil. When he resumed it Savonarola had been burned for heresy, and Fra Bartolommeo was a brother in his convent of S. Marco. Savonarola has sometimes been described as an iconoclast, obstinately hostile to the fine arts. This is by no means a true account of the crusade he carried on against the pagan sensuality of his contemporaries. He desired that art should remain the submissive handmaid of the Church and the willing servant of pure morality. While he denounced the heathenism of the style in vogue at Florence, and forbade the study of the nude, he strove to encourage religious painting, and established a school for its exercise in the cloister of S. Marco. It was in this monastic *bottega* that Fra Bartolommeo, in concert with his friend Albertinelli, worked for the benefit of the convent after the year 1506. The reforms Savonarola attempted in the fine arts as in manners, by running counter to the tendencies of the Renaissance at a moment when society was too corrupt to be regenerated, and the passion for antiquity was too powerful to be restrained, proved of necessity ineffective. It may further be said that the limitations he imposed would have been fatal to the free development of art if they had been observed.

Several painters, besides Fra Baccio, submitted to Savonarola's influence. Among these the most distinguished were the pure and gentle Lorenzo di Credi and Sandro Botticelli, who, after the great preacher's death, is said to have abandoned painting. Neither Lorenzo di Credi nor Fra Baccio possessed a portion of the prophet's fiery spirit. Had that but found expression in their cloistral pictures, one of

the most peculiar and characteristic flowers of art the world has ever known, would then have bloomed in Florence. The mantle of Savonarola, however, if it fell upon any painter, fell on Michael Angelo, and we must seek an echo of the friar's thunders in the Sistine Chapel. Fra Bartolommeo was too tender and too timid. The sublimities of tragic passion lay beyond his scope. Though I have ventured to call him the painter of adoration, he did not feel even this movement of the soul with the intensity of Fra Angelico. In the person of S. Dominic kneeling beneath the cross Fra Angelico painted worship as an ecstasy, wherein the soul goes forth with love and pain and yearning beyond any power of words or tears or music to express what it would utter. To these heights of the ascetic ideal Fra Bartolommeo never soared. His sobriety bordered upon the prosaic.

We have now reached the great age of the Italian Renaissance, the age in which, not counting for the moment Venice, four archangelic natures gathered up all that had been hitherto achieved in art since the days of Pisano and Giotto, adding such celestial illumination from the sunlight of their inborn genius that in them the world for ever sees what art can do. Lionardo da Vinci was born in Valdarno in 1452, and died in France in 1519. Michael Angelo Buonarroti was born at Caprese, in the Casentino, in 1475, and died at Rome in 1564, having outlived the lives of his great peers by nearly half a century. Raphael Santi was born at Urbino in 1483, and died in Rome in 1520. Antonio Allegri was born at Correggio in 1494, and died there in 1534. To these four men, each in his own degree and according to his own peculiar quality of mind, the fulness of the Renaissance, in its power and freedom, was revealed. They entered the inner shrine, where dwelt the spirit of their age, and bore to the world without the message each of them had heard. In their work posterity still may read the

meaning of that epoch, differently rendered according to the difference of gifts in each consummate artist, but comprehended in its unity by study of the four together. Lionardo is the wizard or diviner; to him the Renaissance offers her mystery and lends her magic. Raphael is the Phœbean singer; to him the Renaissance reveals her joy and dowers him with her gift of melody. Correggio is the Ariel or Faun; he has surprised laughter upon the face of the universe, and he paints this laughter in ever-varying movement. Michael Angelo is the prophet and Sibylline seer; to him the Renaissance discloses the travail of her spirit; him she endues with power; he wrests her secret, voyaging, like an ideal Columbus, the vast abyss of thought alone. In order that this revelation of the Renaissance in painting should be complete, it is necessary to add a fifth power to these four—that of the Venetian masters, who are the poets of carnal beauty, the rhetoricians of mundane pomp, the impassioned interpreters of all things great and splendid in the pageant of the outer world. As Venice herself, by type of constitution and historical development, remained sequestered from the rest of Italy, so her painters demand separate treatment.[1] It is enough, therefore, for the present to remember that without the note they utter the chord of the Renaissance lacks its harmony.

Lionardo, the natural son of Messer Pietro, notary of Florence and landed proprietor at Vinci, was so beautiful of person that no one, says Vasari, has sufficiently extolled his charm; so strong of limb that he could bend an iron ring or horse-shoe between his fingers; so eloquent of speech that those who listened to his words were fain to answer 'Yes' or 'No' as he thought fit. This child of grace and persuasion was a wonderful musician. The Duke of Milan sent for him to play upon his lute and improvise Italian canzoni. The

[1] See below, chapter vii.

lute he carried was of silver, fashioned like a horse's head, and tuned according to acoustic laws discovered by himself. Of the songs he sang to its accompaniment none have been preserved. Only one sonnet remains to show of what sort was the poetry of Lionardo, prized so highly by the men of his own generation. This, too, is less remarkable for poetic beauty than for sober philosophy expressed with singular brevity of phrase.[1]

This story of Da Vinci's lute might be chosen as a parable of his achievement. Art and science were never separated in his work; and both were not unfrequently subservient to some fanciful caprice, some bizarre freak of originality. Curiosity and love of the uncommon ruled his nature. By intuition and by persistent interrogation of nature he penetrated many secrets of science; but he was contented with the acquisition of knowledge. Once found, he had but little care to distribute the results of his investigations; at most he sought to use them for purposes of practical utility.[2]

[1] This sonnet I have translated into English with such closeness to the original words as I found possible:—

He who can do not what he wills, should try
To will what he can do; for since 'tis vain
To will what can't be compassed, to abstain
From idle wishing is philosophy.
Lo, all our happiness and grief imply
Knowledge or not of will's ability:
They therefore can, who will what ought to be.
Nor wrest true reason from her seat awry.
Nor what a man can, should he always will:
Oft seemeth sweet what after is not so;
And what I wished, when had, hath cost a tear.
Then, reader of these lines, if thou wouldst still
Be helpful to thyself, to others dear,
Will to can alway what thou ought to do.

[2] See the letter addressed by Lionardo to Lodovico Sforza enumerating his claims as a mechanician, military and civil engineer, architect, &c. It need scarcely be mentioned that he served Cesare Borgia and the

Even in childhood he is said to have perplexed his teachers by propounding arithmetical problems. In his maturity he carried anatomy further than Della Torre; he invented machinery for water-mills and aqueducts; he devised engines of war, discovered the secret of conical rifle-bullets, adapted paddle-wheels to boats, projected new systems of siege artillery, investigated the principles of optics, designed buildings, made plans for piercing mountains, raising churches, connecting rivers, draining marshes, clearing harbours.[1] There was no branch of study whereby nature through the effort of the inquisitive intellect might be subordinated to the use of man, of which he was not master. Nor, richly gifted as was Lionardo, did he trust his natural facility. His patience was no less marvellous than the quickness of his insight. He lived to illustrate the definition of genius as the capacity for taking infinite pains.

While he was a boy, says Vasari, Lionardo modelled in terra-cotta certain heads of women smiling. This was in the workshop of Verocchio, who had already fixed a smile on David's face in bronze. When an old man, he left 'Mona Lisa' on the easel not quite finished, the portrait of a subtle, shadowy, uncertain smile. This smile, this enigmatic re-

Florentine Republic as an engineer, and that much of his time at Milan was spent in hydraulic works upon the Adda. It should be added here that Lionardo committed the results of his discoveries to writing; but he published very little, and that by no means the most precious portion of his thoughts. He founded at Milan an Academy of Arts and Sciences, if this name may be given to a reunion of artists, scholars, and men of the world, to whom it is probable that he communicated his researches in anatomy. The *Treatise on Painting*, which bears his name, is a compilation from notes and MSS. first printed in 1651.

[1] The folio volume of sketches in the Ambrosian Library at Milan contains designs for all these works. The collection in the Royal Library at Windsor is no less rich. Among Lionardo's scientific drawings in the latter place may be mentioned a series of maps illustrating the river system of Central Italy, with plans for improved drainage.

velation of a movement in the soul, this seductive ripple on the surface of the human personality, was to Lionardo a symbol of the secret of the world, an image of the universal mystery. It haunted him all through his life, and innumerable were the attempts he made to render by external form the magic of this fugitive and evanescent charm.

Through long days he would follow up and down the streets of Florence or of Milan beautiful unknown faces, learning them by heart, interpreting their changes of expression, reading the thoughts through the features. These he afterwards committed to paper. We possess many such sketches—a series of ideal portraits, containing each an unsolved riddle that the master read; a procession of shadows, cast by reality, that, entering the camera lucida of the artist's brain, gained new and spiritual quality.[1] In some of them his fancy seems to be imprisoned in the labyrinths of hair; in others the eyes deep with feeling or hard with gemlike brilliancy have caught it, or the lips that tell and hide so much, or the nostrils quivering with momentary emotion. Beauty, inexpressive of inner meaning, must, we conceive, have had but slight attraction for him. We do not find that he drew 'a fair naked body' for the sake of its carnal charm his hasty studies of the nude are often faulty, mere memoranda of attitude and gesture. The human form was interesting to him either scientifically or else as an index to the soul. Yet he felt the influence of personal loveliness. His favourite pupil Salaino was a youth 'of singular grace,

[1] Shelley says of the poet:—

> He will watch from dawn to gloom
> The lake-reflected sun illume
> The yellow bees in the ivy bloom;
> Nor heed nor see what things they be,
> But from these create he can
> Forms more real than living man,
> Nurslings of immortality.

with curled and waving hair, a feature of personal beauty by which Lionardo was always greatly pleased.' Hair, the most mysterious of human things, the most manifold in form and hue, snakelike in its subtlety for the entanglement of souls, had naturally supreme attractiveness for the magician of the arts.

With like energy Lionardo bent himself to divine the import of ugliness. Whole pages of his sketch-book are filled with squalid heads of shrivelled crones and ghastly old men—with idiots, goitred cretins, criminals, and clowns. It was not that he loved the horrible for its own sake; but he was determined to seize character, to command the gamut of human physiognomy from ideal beauty down to forms bestialised by vice and disease. The story related by Giraldi concerning the head of Judas in the 'Cenacolo' at Milan, sufficiently illustrates the method of Lionardo in creating types and the utility of such caricatures as his notebooks contain.[1]

It is told that he brought into his room one day a collection of reptiles—lizards, newts, toads, vipers, efts—all creatures that are loathsome to the common eye. These, by the magic of imagination, he combined into a shape so terrible that those who saw it shuddered. Medusa's snake-enwoven head exhaling poisonous vapour from the livid lips; Leda, swanlike beside her swan lover; Chimæra, in whom many natures mingled and made one; the conflict of a dragon and a lion; S. John conceived not as a prophet but as a vine-crowned Faun, the harbinger of joy:—over pictorial motives of this kind, attractive by reason of their complexity or mystery, he loved to brood; and to this fascination of a sphinx-like charm we owe some of his most exquisite drawings. Lionardo more than any other artist who has ever lived (except perhaps his great predecessor Leo Battista Alberti) felt the primal sympathies

[1] See De Stendhal, *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*, p. 143, for this story.

that bind men to the earth, their mother, and to living things, their brethren.[1] Therefore the borderland between humanity and nature allured him with a spell half æsthetic and half scientific. In the dawn of Hellas this sympathetic apprehension of the world around him would have made him a supreme mythopoet. In the dawn of the modern world curiosity claimed the lion's share of his genius: nor can it be denied that his art suffered by this division of interests. The time was not yet come for accurate physiological investigation, or for the true birth of the scientific spirit; and in any age it would have been difficult for one man to establish on a sound basis discoveries made in so many realms as those explored by Lionardo. We cannot, therefore, but regret that he was not more exclusively a painter. If, however, he had confined his activity to the production of works equal to the 'Cenacolo,' we should have missed the most complete embodiment in one personality of the twofold impulses of the Renaissance and of its boundless passion for discovery.

Lionardo's turn for physical science led him to study the technicalities of art with fervent industry. Whatever his predecessors had acquired in the knowledge of materials, the chemistry of colours, the mathematics of composition, the laws of perspective, and the illusions of *chiaroscuro*, he developed to the utmost. To find a darker darkness and a brighter brightness than had yet been shown upon the painter's canvas; to solve problems of fore-shortening; to deceive the eye by finely graduated tones and subtle touches; to submit the freest play of form to simple figures of geometry in grouping, were among the objects he most earnestly pursued.

[1] In the *Treatise on Painting*, da Vinci argues strongly against isolating man. He regarded the human being as in truth a microcosm to be only understood in relation to the world around him, expressing, as a painter, the same thought as Pico. (See Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, p. 35.) Therefore he urges the claims of landscape on the attention of artists.

At the same time his deep feeling for all things that have life, gave him new power in the delineation of external nature. The branching of flower-stems, the outlines of fig-leaves, the attitudes of beasts and birds in motion, the arching of the fan-palm, were rendered by him with the same consummate skill as the dimple on a cheek or the fine curves of a young man's lips.[1] Wherever he perceived a difficulty, he approached and conquered it. Love, which is the soul of art—Love, the bondslave of Beauty and the son of Poverty by Craft—led him to these triumphs. He used to buy caged birds in the market-place that he might let them loose. He was attached to horses, and kept a sumptuous stable; and these he would draw in eccentric attitudes, studying their anatomy in detail for his statue of Francesco Sforza.[2] In the 'Battle of the Standard,' known to us only by a sketch of Rubens,[3] he gave passions to the horse—not human passion, nor yet merely equine—but such as horses might feel when placed upon a par with men. In like manner the warriors are fiery with bestial impulses—leonine fury, wolfish ferocity, fox-like cunning. Their very armour takes the shape of monstrous reptiles. To such an extent did the interchange of human and animal properties haunt Lionardo's fancy.

From what has been already said we shall be better able

[1] I might refer in detail to four studies of bramble branches, leaves, and flowers and fruit, in the royal collection at Windsor, most wonderful for patient accuracy and delicate execution: also to drawings of oak leaves, wild guelder-rose, broom, columbine, asphodel, bull-rush, and wood-spurge in the same collection. These careful studies are as valuable for the botanist as for the artist. To render the specific character of each plant with greater precision would be impossible.

[2] See the series of anatomical studies of the horse in the Royal Collection.

[3] Engraved by Edelinck. The drawing has obvious Lionardesque qualities; but how far it may be from the character of the original we can guess by Rubens' transcript from Mantegna. (See above, p. 200.) De Stendhal says wittily of this work, 'C'est Virgile traduit par Madame de Staël,' op. cit. p. 162

to understand Lionardo's love of the bizarre and grotesque. One day a vine-dresser brought him a very curious lizard. The master fitted it with wings injected with quicksilver to give them motion as the creature crawled. Eyes, horns, and a beard, a marvellous dragon's mask, were placed upon its head. This strange beast lived in a cage, where Lionardo tamed it; but no one, says Vasari, dared so much as to look at it.[1] On quaint puzzles and perplexing schemes he mused a good part of his life away. At one time he was for making wings to fly with; at another he invented ropes that should uncoil, strand by strand; again, he devised a system of flat corks, by means of which to walk on water.[2] One day, after having scraped the intestines of a sheep so thin that he could hold them in the hollow of his hand, he filled them with wind from a bellows, and blew and blew until the room was choked, and his visitors had to run into corners. Lionardo told them that this was a proper symbol of genius.

Such stories form what may be called the legend of Lionardo's life; and some of them seem simple, others almost childish.[3] They illustrate what is meant when we call him the wizard of the Renaissance. Art, nature, life, the mysteries of existence, the infinite capacity of human thought, the riddle of the world, all that the Greeks called Pan, so swayed and allured him that, while he dreamed and wrought and never

[1] In the Royal Collection at Windsor there are anatomical drawings for the construction of an imaginary quadruped with gigantic claws. The bony, muscular, and venous structure of its legs and feet is accurately indicated.

[2] See the drawings engraved and published by Gerli in his *Disegni di Lionardo da Vinci*, Milan, 1784.

[3] Vasari is the chief source of these legends. Giraldi, Lomazzo, the Milanese historian of painting, and Bandello, the novelist, supply further details. It appears from all accounts that Lionardo impressed his contemporaries as a singular and most commanding personality. There is a touch of reverence in even the strangest stories, which is wanting in the legend of Piero di Cosimo.

ceased from toil, he seemed to have achieved but little. The fancies of his brain were, perhaps, too subtle and too fragile to be made apparent to the eyes of men. He was wont, after years of labour, to leave his work still incomplete, feeling that he could not perfect it as he desired: yet even his most fragmentary sketches have a finish beyond the scope of lesser men. 'Extraordinary power,' says Vasari, 'was in his case conjoined with remarkable facility, a mind of regal boldness and magnanimous daring.' Yet he was constantly accused of indolence and inability to execute.[1] Often and often he made vast preparations and accomplished nothing. It is well known how the Prior of S. Maria delle Grazie complained that Lionardo stood for days looking at his fresco, and for weeks never came near it; how the monks of the Annunziata at Florence were cheated out of their painting, for which elaborate designs had yet been made; how Leo X., seeing him mix oils with varnish to make a new medium, exclaimed, 'Alas! this man will do nothing; he thinks of the end before he makes a beginning.' A good answer to account for the delay was always ready on the painter's lips, as that the man of genius works most when his hands are idlest; Judas, sought in vain through all the thieves' resorts in Milan, is not found; I cannot hope to see the face of Christ except in Paradise. Again, when an equestrian statue of Francesco Sforza had been modelled in all its parts, another model was begun because Da Vinci would fain show the warrior triumphing over a fallen foe.[2] The first motive seemed to him tame; the

[1] Even Michael Angelo, meeting him in Florence, flung in his teeth that 'he had made the model of a horse to cast in bronze, and could not cast it, and through shame left it as it was unfinished.' See *Arch. St. It.*, serie terza, xvi. 226.

[2] In the Royal Collection at Windsor there is a whole series of studies for these two statues, together with drawings for the mould in which Lionardo intended to cast them. The second of the two is sketched with great variety of motive. The horse is rearing; the fallen enemy is

second was unrealisable in bronze. 'I can do anything possible to man,' he wrote to Lodovico Sforza, 'and as well as any living artist either in sculpture or painting.' But he would do nothing as taskwork, and his creative brain loved better to invent than to execute.[1] 'Of a truth,' continues his biographer, 'there is good reason to believe that the very greatness of his most exalted mind, aiming at more than could be effected, was itself an impediment; perpetually seeking to add excellence to excellence and perfection to perfection. This was without doubt the true hindrance, so that, as our Petrarch has it, the work was retarded by desire.' At the close of that cynical and positive century, the spirit whereof was so well expressed by Cosimo de' Medici,[2] Lionardo set before himself aims infinite instead of finite. His designs of wings to fly with symbolise his whole endeavour. He believed in solving the insoluble; and nature had so richly dowered him in the very dawntime of discovery, that he was almost justified in this delusion. Having caught the Proteus of the world, he tried to grasp him; but the god changed shape beneath his touch. Having surprised Silenus asleep, he begged from him a song; but the song Silenus sang was so marvellous in its variety, so subtle in its modulations, that Lionardo could do no more than recall scattered phrases. His Proteus was the spirit of the Renaissance. The Silenus from whom he forced the song was the double nature of man and of the world.

vainly striving to defend himself; the victor in one drawing is reining in his steed, in another is waving a truncheon, in a third is brandishing his sword, in a fourth is holding the sword in act to thrust. The designs for the pedestals, sometimes treated as a tomb and sometimes as a fountain, are equally varied.

[1] 'Concevoir,' said Balzac, 'c'est jouir, c'est fumer des cigarettes enchantées; mais sans l'exécution tout s'en va en rêve et en fumée.' Quoted by Sainte-Beuve, *Causeries du Lundi*, vol. ii. p. 353.

[2] See Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, p. 128, 129.

By ill chance it happened that Lionardo's greatest works soon perished. His cartoon at Florence disappeared. His model for Sforza's statue was used as a target by French bowmen. His 'Last Supper' remains a mere wreck in the Convent delle Grazie. Such as it is, blurred by ill-usage and neglect, more blurred by impious repainting, that fresco must be seen by those who wish to understand Da Vinci. It has well been called the compendium of all his studies and of all his writings; and, chronologically, it is the first masterpiece of the perfected Renaissance.[1] Other painters had represented the Last Supper as a solemn prologue to the Passion, or as the mystical inauguration of the greatest Christian sacrament.[2] But none had dared to break the calm of the event by a dramatic action. The school of Giotto, Fra Angelico, Ghirlandajo, Perugino, even Signorelli, remained within the sphere of symbolical suggestion; and their work gained in dignity what it lost in intensity. Lionardo combined both. He undertook to paint a moment, to delineate the effect of a single word upon twelve men seated at a table, and to do this without sacrificing the tranquillity demanded by ideal art, and without impairing the divine majesty of Him from whose lips that word has fallen. The time has long gone by for detailed criticism or description of a painting known to everybody. It is enough to observe that the ideal representation of a dramatic moment, the life breathed into each part of the composition, the variety of the types chosen to express varieties of character, and the scientific distribution of the twelve Apostles in four groups of three around the central Christ, mark the appearance of a new spirit of power and freedom in the arts. What had hitherto been treated with religious timidity, with conventional stiffness,

[1] It was finished, according to Fra Paciolo, in 1498.

[2] Signorelli, with his usual originality, chose the moment when Christ broke bread and gave it to His disciples. In that rare picture at Cortona, we see not the betrayed chief but the founder of a new religion.

or with realistic want of grandeur, was now humanised and at the same time transported into a higher intellectual region; and though Lionardo discrowned the Apostles of their aureoles, he for the first time in the history of painting created a Christ not unworthy to be worshipped as the *præsens Deus*. We know not whether to admire most the perfection of the painter's art or his insight into spiritual things.[1]

If we are forced to feel that, with Da Vinci, accomplishment fell short of power and promise, the case is very different with Raphael. In him there was no perplexity, no division of interests. He was fascinated by no insoluble mystery and absorbed by no seductive problems. His faculty and his artistic purpose were exactly balanced, adequate, and mutually supporting. He saw by intuition what to do, and he did it without let or hindrance, exercising from his boyhood till his early death an unimpeded energy of pure productiveness. Like Mozart, to whom he bears in many respects a remarkable resemblance, Raphael was gifted with inexhaustible fertility and with unwearied industry. Like Mozart, again, he had a nature which converted everything to beauty. Thought, passion, emotion, became in his art living melody. We almost forget his strength in admiration of his grace; the travail of his intellect is hidden by the serenity of his style. There is nothing overmuch in any portion of his work, no

[1] The Cenacolo alone will not enable the student to understand Lionardo. He must give his attention to the master's sketch books, those studies in chalk, in tempera, on thin canvas and paper, prepared for the stylus or the pen, which Vasari calls the final triumphs of designing, and of which, in spite of the loss of many of his books, the surviving specimens are very numerous. Some are easily accessible in Gerli, Chamberlaine, and the autotype reproductions. It is possible that a sympathetic student may get closer to the all-embracing and all-daring genius of the magician through these drawings than if he had before him an elaborate work in fresco or in oils. They express the many-sided, mobile, curious, and subtle genius of the man in its entirety.

sense of effort, no straining of a situation, not even that element of terror needful to the true sublime. It is as though the spirit of young Greece had lived in him again, purifying his taste to perfection and restraining him from the delineation of things stern or horrible.

Raphael found in this world nothing but its joy, and communicated to his ideal the beauty of untouched virginity. Brescia might be sacked with sword and flame. The Baglioni might hew themselves to pieces in Perugia. The plains of Ravenna might flow with blood. Urbino might change masters and obey the viperous Duke Valentino. Raphael, meanwhile, working through his short May-life of less than twenty years, received from nature and from man a message that was harmony unspoiled by one discordant note. His very person was a symbol of his genius. Lionardo was beautiful but stately, with firm lips and penetrating glance; he conquered by the magnetism of an incalculable personality. The loveliness of Raphael was fair and flexible, fascinating not by power or mystery, but by the winning charm of open-hearted sweetness. To this physical beauty, rather delicate than strong, he united spiritual graces of the most amiable nature. He was gentle, docile, modest, ready to oblige, free from jealousy, binding all men to him by his cheerful courtesy.[1] In morals he was pure. Indeed, judged by the lax standard of those times, he might be called almost immaculate. His intellectual capacity, in all that concerned the art of painting, was unbounded; but we cannot place him among the many-sided heroes of the Renaissance. What he attempted in sculpture, though elegant, is comparatively insignificant; and

[1] 'Raffaello, che era la gentilezza stessa . . . . restavano vinti dalla cortesia e dall' arte sua, ma più dal genio della sua buona natura; la quale era sì piena di gentilezza e sì colma di carità, che egli si vedeva che fino agli animali l' onoravano, non che gli uomini.'—Vasari, vol. viii. pp. 6, 60.

the same may be said about his buildings. As a painter he was capable of comprehending and expressing all things without excess or sense of labour. Of no other artist do we feel that he was so instinctively, unerringly right in what he thought and did.

Among his mental faculties the power of assimilation seems to have been developed to an extraordinary degree. He learned the rudiments of his art in the house of his father Santi at Urbino, where a Madonna is still shown—the portrait of his mother, with a child, perhaps the infant Raphael, upon her lap. Starting, soon after his father's death, as a pupil of Perugino, he speedily acquired that master's manner so perfectly that his earliest works are only to be distinguished from Perugino's by their greater delicacy, spontaneity, and inventiveness. Though he absorbed all that was excellent in the Peruginesque style, he avoided its affectations, and seemed to take departure for a higher flight from the most exquisite among his teacher's early paintings. Later on, while still a lad, he escaped from Umbrian conventionality by learning all that was valuable in the art of Masaccio and Fra Bartolommeo. To the latter master, himself educated by the influence of Lionardo, Raphael owed more, perhaps, than to any other of his teachers. The method of combining figures in masses, needful to the general composition, while they preserve a subordinate completeness of their own, had been applied with almost mathematical precision by the Frate in his fresco at S. Maria Nuova.[1] It reappears in all Raphael's work subsequent to his first visit to Florence[2] (1504–1506). So great, indeed, is the resemblance of treatment between the two painters that we know not well which owed the other most. Many groups of women and children in the Stanze, for example

[1] See above, p. 223.

[2] The 'Holy Family' at Munich, and the 'Madonna del Baldacchino' in the Pitti, might be mentioned as experiments on Raphael's part to perfect the Frate's scheme of composition.

—especially in the 'Miracle of Bolsena' and the 'Heliodorus'—seem almost identical with Fra Bartolommeo's 'Madonna della Misericordia' at Lucca. Finally, when Raphael settled in Rome, he laid himself open to the influence of Michael Angelo, and drank in the classic spirit from the newly discovered antiques. Here at last it seemed as though his native genius might suffer from contact with the potent style of his great rival; and there are many students of art who feel that Raphael's later manner was a declension from the divine purity of his early pictures. There is, in fact, a something savouring of overbloom in the Farnesina frescoes, as though the painter's faculty had been strained beyond its natural force. Muscles are exaggerated to give the appearance of strength, and open mouths are multiplied to indicate astonishment and action. These faults may be found even in the Cartoons. Yet who shall say that Raphael's power was on the decline, or that his noble style was passing into mannerism, after studying both the picture of the 'Transfiguration' and the careful drawings from the nude prepared for this last work?

So delicate was the assimilative tendency in Raphael, that what he learned from all his teachers, from Perugino, Fra Bartolommeo, Masaccio, Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and the antique, was mingled with his own style without sacrifice of individuality. Inferior masters imitated him, and passed their pictures off upon posterity as Raphael's; but to mistake a genuine piece of his painting for the performance of another is almost impossible. Each successive step he made was but a liberation of his genius, a stride toward the full expression of the beautiful he saw and served. He was never an eclectic. The masterpieces of other artists taught him how to comprehend his own ideal.

Raphael is not merely a man, but a school. Just as in his genius he absorbed and comprehended many diverse styles,

so are many worthy craftsmen included in his single name. Fresco-painters, masters of the easel, workmen in mosaic and marquetrie, sculptors, builders, arras-weavers, engravers, decorators of ceilings and of floors, all laboured under his eye, receiving designs from his hand, and executing what was called thereafter by his name.[1] It was thus partly by his facility and energy, partly by the use he made of other men, that Raphael was able to achieve so much. In the Vatican he covered the walls and ceilings of the Stanze with historical and symbolical frescoes that embrace the whole of human knowledge. The cramping limits of ecclesiastical tradition are transcended. The synod of the antique sages finds a place beside the synod of the Fathers and the company of Saints. Parnassus and the allegory of the virtues front each other. The legend of Marsyas and the mythus of the Fall are companion pictures. A new catholicity, a new orthodoxy of the beautiful, appears. The Renaissance in all its breadth and liberality of judgment takes ideal form. Nor is there any sense of discord; for the genius of Raphael views both revelations, Christian and pagan, from a point of view of art above them. To his pure and unimpeded faculty the task of translating motives so diverse into mutually concordant shapes was easy. On the domed ceilings of the Loggie he painted sacred history in a series of exquisitely simple compositions, known as Raphael's Bible. The walls and pilasters were adorned with arabesques that anticipated the discovery of Pompeii, and surpassed the best of Roman frescoes in variety and freedom. With his own hands he coloured the incomparable 'Triumph of Galatea' in Agostino Chigi's villa on the Tiber, while his pupils traced the legend

[1] See Vasari, vol. viii. p. 60, for a description of the concord that reigned in this vast workshop. The genius and the gentle nature of Raphael penetrated the whole group of artists, and seemed to give them a single soul.

of Cupid and Psyche from his drawings on the roof of the great banquet hall. Remaining within the circuit of Rome, we may turn from the sibyls of S. Maria della Pace to the genii of the planets in S. Maria del Popolo, from the 'Violin-player' of the Sciarra palace to the 'Transfiguration' in the Vatican: wherever we go, we find the masterpieces of this youth, so various in conception, so equal in performance. And then, to think that the palaces and picture-galleries of Europe are crowded with his easel-pictures, that his original drawings display a boundless store of prodigal inventive creativeness, that the Cartoons, of which England is proud, are alone enough to found a mighty master's fame!

The vast mass of Raphael's works is by itself astounding. The accuracy of their design and the perfection of their execution are literally overwhelming to the imagination, that attempts to realise the conditions of his short life. There is nothing, or but very little, of rhetoric in all this world of pictures. The brain has guided the hand throughout, and the result is sterling poetry. The knowledge, again, expressed in many of his frescoes is so thorough that we wonder whether in his body lived again the soul of some accomplished sage. How, for example, did he appropriate the history of philosophy, set forth so luminously in the 'School of Athens,' that each head, each gesture, is the epitome of some system? Fabio Calvi may, indeed, have supplied him with serviceable notes on Greek philosophy. But to Raphael alone belongs the triumph of having personified the dry elements of learning in appropriate living forms. The same is true of the 'Parnassus,' and, in a less degree, of the 'Disputa.' To the physiognomist these frescoes will always be invaluable. The 'Heliodorus,' the 'Miracle of Bolsena,' and the Cartoons, display a like faculty applied with more dramatic purpose. Passion and action take the place of representative ideas; but the capacity for translating into

perfect human form what has first been intellectually apprehended by the artist, is the same.

If, after estimating the range of thought revealed in this portion of Raphael's work, we next consider the labour of the mind involved in the distribution of so many multitudes of beautiful and august human figures, in the modelling of their drapery, the study of their expression, and their grouping into balanced compositions, we may form some notion of the magnitude of Raphael's performance. It is, indeed, probable that all attempts at reflective analysis of this kind do injustice to the spontaneity of the painter's method. Yet, even supposing that the 'Miraculous Draught of Fishes' or the 'School of Athens' were seen by him as in a vision, this presumption will increase our wonder at the imagination which could hold so rich a store of details ready for immediate use. That Raphael paid the most minute attention to the details of his work, is shown by the studies made for these two subjects, and by the drawings for the 'Transfiguration.' A young man bent on putting forth his power the first time in a single picture that should prove his mastery, could not have laboured with more diligence than Raphael at the height of his fame and in full possession of his matured faculty.

When, furthermore, we take into account the variety of Raphael's work, we arrive at a new point of wonder. The drawing of 'Alexander's Marriage with Roxana,' the 'Temptation of Adam by Eve,' and the 'Massacre of the Innocents,' engraved by Marc Antonio, are unsurpassed not only as compositions, but also as studies of the nude in chosen attitudes, powerfully felt and nobly executed. In these designs, which he never used for painting, the same high style is successively applied to a pageant, an idyll, and a drama.[1] The rapture of

[1] The fresco of 'Alexander' in the Palazzo Borghese is by an imitator.

Greek art in its most youthful moment has never been recaptured by a modern painter with more force and fire of fancy than in the 'Galatea.' The tenderness of Christian feeling has found no more exalted expression than in the multitudes of the Madonnas, one more lovely than another, like roses on a tree in June, from the maidenly 'Madonna del Gran' Duca' to the celestial vision of the San Sisto, that sublimest lyric of the art of Catholicity.[1] It is only by hurrying through a list like this that we can appreciate the many-sided perfection of Raphael's accomplishment. How, lastly, was it possible that this young painter should have found the time to superintend the building of S. Peter's, and to form a plan for excavating Rome in its twelve ancient regions?[2]

When Lomazzo assigned emblems to the chief painters of the Renaissance, he gave to Michael Angelo the dragon of contemplation, and to Mantegna the serpent of sagacity. For Raphael, by a happier instinct, he reserved man, the microcosm, the symbol of powerful grace, incarnate intellect. This quaint fancy of the Milanese critic touches the truth. What distinguishes the whole work of Raphael, is its humanity in the double sense of the humane and human. Phœbus, as imagined by the Greeks, was not more radiant, more victorious by the marvel of his smile, more intolerant of things obscene or ugly. Like Apollo chasing the Eumenides from his Delphian shrine, Raphael will not suffer his eyes to fall on what is loathsome or horrific. Even sadness and sorrow, tragedy and death, take loveliness from him. And here it must be mentioned that he shunned stern and painful

[1] The 'Madonna di San Sisto' was painted for a banner to be borne in processions. It is a subtle observation of Rio that the banner, an invention of the Umbrian school, corresponds in painting to the hymn in poetry.

[2] See Vol. II., *Revival of Learning*, p. 816, for Raphael's letter on this subject to Leo X.

subjects. He painted no martyrdom, no 'Last Judgment,' and no 'Crucifixion,' if we except the little early picture belonging to Lord Dudley.[1] His men and women are either glorious with youth or dignified in hale old age. Touched by his innocent and earnest genius, mankind is once more gifted with the harmony of intellect and flesh and feeling, that belonged to Hellas. Instead of asceticism, Hellenic temperance is the virtue prized by Raphael. Over his niche in the Temple of Fame might be written: 'I have said ye are gods;'—for the children of men in his ideal world are divinized. The godlike spirit of man is all in all. Happy indeed was the art that by its limitations and selections could thus early express the good news of the Renaissance; while in the spheres of politics and ethics, science and religion, we are still far from having learned its lesson.

Correggio is the Faun or Ariel of Renaissance painting. Turning to him from Raphael, we are naturally first struck by the affinities and differences between them. Both drew from their study of the world the elements of joy which it contains; but the gladness of Correggio was more sensuous than that of Raphael; his intellectual faculties were less developed; his rapture was more tumultuous and Bacchantic. Like Raphael, Correggio died young; but his brief life was spent in comparative obscurity and solitude. Far from the society of scholars and artists, ignorant of courts, unpatronised by princes, he wrought for himself alone the miracle of

[1] 'La Spasimo di Sicilia' is the single Passion picture of Raphael's maturity. The predella of 'Christ carrying the Cross' at Leigh Court, and the 'Christ showing His Wounds' in the Tosi Gallery at Brescia, are both early works painted under Umbrian influence. The Borghese 'Entombment,' painted for Atalanta Baglioni, a pen-and-ink drawing of the 'Pietà' in the Louvre collection, Marc Antonio's engraving of the 'Massacre of the Innocents,' and an early picture of the 'Agony in the Garden,' are all the other painful subjects I can now remember.

brightness and of movement that delights us in his frescoes and his easel-pictures.

> Like a poet hidden
> In the light of thought,
> Singing hymns unbidden,

was this lyrist of luxurious ecstasy. In his work there was nothing worldly; that divides him from the Venetians, whose sensuousness he shared: nothing scientific; that distinguishes him from Da Vinci, the magic of whose *chiaroscuro* he comprehended: nothing contemplative; that separates him from Michael Angelo, the audacity of whose design in dealing with forced attitudes he rivalled, without apparently having enjoyed the opportunity of studying his works. The cheerfulness of Raphael, the wizardry of Lionardo, and the boldness of Michael Angelo, met in him to form a new style, the originality of which is indisputable, and which takes us captive—not by intellectual power, but by the impulse of emotion. Of his artistic education we know nothing; and when we call him the Ariel of painting, this means that we are compelled to think of him as an elemental spirit, whose bidding the air and the light and the hues of the morning obey.

Correggio created a world of beautiful human beings, the whole condition of whose existence is an innocent and radiant wantonness.[1] Over the domain of tragedy he had no sway; nor could he deal with subjects demanding pregnancy of intellectual meaning. He paints the three Fates for instance like young and joyous Bacchantes; if we placed rose-garlands and thyrsi in their hands instead of the distaff and the thread of human destinies, they might figure upon the panels of a

[1] For a fuller working out of this analysis I must refer to my *Sketches in Italy*, article 'Parma.' Much that follows is a quotation from that essay.

banquet-chamber in Pompeii. Nor, again, did he possess that severe and lofty art of composition which seeks the highest beauty of design in architectural harmony supreme above the melodies of gracefulness in detail. He was essentially a lyrical as distinguished from an epical or dramatic poet. The unity of his work is derived from the effect of light and atmosphere, the inbreathed soul of tremulous and throbbing life, which bathes and liquefies the whole. It was enough for him to produce a gleeful symphony by the play of light and colour, by the animation of his figures, and by the intoxicating beauty of his forms. His angels are genii disimprisoned from the chalices of flowers, houris of an erotic Paradise, elemental sprites of nature wantoning in Eden in her prime. They belong to the generation of the fauns. Like fauns, they combine a certain wildness, a dithyrambic ecstasy, a delight in rapid motion as they revel amid clouds and flowers, with the permanent and all-pervading sweetness of the painter's style. Correggio's sensibility to light and colour—that quality which makes him unique among painters —was on a par with his feeling for form. Brightness and darkness are woven together on his figures like an impalpable veil, aërial and transparent, enhancing the palpitations of voluptuous movement which he loved. His colouring does not glow or burn; blithesome and delicate, it seems exactly such a beauty-bloom as sense requires for its satiety. That cord of jocund colour which may fitly be combined with the smiles of daylight, the clear blues found in laughing eyes, the pinks that tinge the cheeks of early youth, and the warm yet silvery tones of healthy flesh, mingle, as in a pearl-shell, on his pictures. Within his own magic circle Correggio reigns supreme; no other artist having blent the witcheries of colouring, *chiaroscuro*, and wanton loveliness of form, into a harmony so perfect in its sensuous charm. To feel his influence, and at the same moment to be the subject of strong

passion, or intense desire, or heroic resolve, or profound contemplation, or pensive melancholy, is impossible. The Northern traveller, standing beneath his master-works in Parma, may hear from each of those radiant and laughing faces what the young Italian said to Goethe: *Perchè pensa? pensando s' invecchia.*

Michael Angelo is the prophet or seer of the Renaissance. It would be impossible to imagine a stronger contrast than that which distinguishes his art from Correggio's, or lives more different in all their details, than those which he and Raphael or Lionardo lived respectively. During the eighty-nine years of his earthly pilgrimage he saw Italy enslaved and Florence extinguished; it was his exceeding bitter fate to watch the rapid decay of the arts and to witness the triumph of sacerdotal despotism over liberal thought. To none of these things was he indifferent; and the sorrow they wrought in his soul, found expression in his painting.[1] Michael Angelo

[1] Much of the controversy about Michael Angelo, which is continually being waged between his admirers and his detractors, might be set at rest if it were acknowledged that there are two distinct ways of judging works of art. We may regard them simply as appealing to our sense of beauty, and affording harmonious intellectual pleasure. Or we may regard them as expressing the thought and spirit of their age, and as utterances made by men whose hearts burned within them. Critics trained in the study of good Greek sculpture, or inclined by temperament to admire the earlier products of Italian painting, are apt to pursue the former path exclusively. They demand serenity and simplicity. Perturbation and violence they denounce as blemishes. It does not occur to them that, though the phenomenon is certainly rare, it does occasionally happen that a man arises whose art is for him the language of his soul, and who lives in sympathetic relation to the sternest interests of his age. If such an artist be born when tranquil thought and serene emotions are impossible for one who feels the meaning of his times with depth, he must either paint and carve lies, or he must abandon the serenity that was both natural and easy to the Greek and the earlier Italian. Michael Angelo was one of these select artistic natures. He used his chisel and his pencil to express, not merely beautiful artistic motives, but what he felt and thought about the

was not framed by nature to fascinate like Lionardo or to charm like Raphael. His manners were severe and simple. When he spoke, his words were brief and pungent. When he wrote, whether in poetry or prose, he used the fewest phrases to express the most condensed meaning. When asked why he had not married, he replied that the wife he had —his art—cost him already too much trouble. He entertained few friends, and shunned society. Brooding over the sermons of Savonarola, the text of the Bible, the discourses of Plato, and the poems of Dante, he made his spirit strong in solitude by the companionship with everlasting thoughts. Therefore, when he was called to paint the Sistine Chapel, he uttered through painting the weightiest prophecy the world has ever seen expressed in plastic form. His theme is nothing less than the burden of the prophets and the Sibyls who preached the coming of a light upon the world, and the condemnation of the world which had rejected it, by an inexorable judge. Michelet says, not without truth, that the spirit of Savonarola lives again in these frescoes. The procession of the four-and-twenty elders, arraigned before the people of Brescia to accuse Italy of sin—the voice that cried to Florence, 'Behold the sword of the Lord, and that swiftly! Behold I, even I, do bring a deluge on the earth!' are both seen and heard here very plainly. But there is more than Savonarola in this prophecy of Michael Angelo's. It contains the stern spirit of Dante, aflame with patriotism, passionate for justice. It embodies the philosophy of Plato. The creative God, who divides light from darkness, who draws Adam from the clay and calls forth new-born Eve in awful beauty, is the Demiurgus

world in which he had to live: and this world was full of the ruin of republics, the corruption and humiliation of society, the subjection of Italy to strangers. In Michael Angelo the student of both art and history finds an inestimably precious and rare point of contact between the inner spirit of an age, and its external expression in sculpture and painting.

of the Greek. Again, it carries the indignation of Isaiah, the wild denunciations of Ezekiel, the monotonous refrain of Jeremiah—'Ah, Lord, Lord!' The classic Sibyls intone their mystic hymns; the Delphic on her tripod of inspiration, the Erythræan bending over her scrolls, the withered witch of Cumæ, the parched prophetess of Libya—all seem to cry, 'Repent, repent! for the kingdom of the spirit is at hand! Repent and awake, for the judgment of the world approaches!' And above these voices we hear a most tremendous wail: 'The nations have come to the birth; but there is not strength to bring forth.' That is the utterance of the Renaissance, as it had appeared in Italy. She who was first among the nations was now last; bound and bleeding, she lay prostrate at the temple-gate she had unlocked. To Michael Angelo was given for his portion—not the alluring mysteries of the new age, not the joy of the renascent world, not the petulant and pulsing rapture of youth: these had been divided between Lionardo, Raphael, and Correggio—but the bitter burden of the sense that the awakening to life is in itself a pain, that the revelation of the liberated soul is itself judgment, that a light is shining, and that the world will not comprehend it. Pregnant as are the paintings of Michael Angelo with religious import, they are no longer Catholic in the sense in which the frescoes of the Lorenzetti and Orcagna and Giotto are Catholic. He went beyond the ecclesiastical standing ground and reached one where philosophy includes the Christian faith. Thus the true spirit of the Renaissance was embodied in his work of art.

Among the multitudes of figures covering the wall above the altar in the Sistine Chapel there is one that might well stand for a symbol of the Renaissance. It is a woman of gigantic stature in the act of toiling upwards from the tomb. Grave clothes impede the motion of her body: they shroud her eyes and gather round her chest. Part only of her face

and throat is visible, where may be read a look of blank bewilderment and stupefaction, a struggle with death's slumber in obedience to some inner impulse. Yet she is rising slowly, half awake, and scarcely conscious, to await a doom still undetermined. Thus Michael Angelo interpreted the meaning of his age.

CHAPTER VII

VENETIAN PAINTING

Painting bloomed late in Venice—Conditions offered by Venice to Art—Shelley and Pietro Aretino—Political circumstances of Venice—Comparison with Florence—The Ducal Palace—Art regarded as an adjunct to State Pageantry—Myth of Venezia—Heroic Deeds of Venice—Tintoretto's Paradise and Guardi's Picture of a Ball—Early Venetian Masters of Murano—Gian Bellini—Carpaccio's little Angels—The Madonna of S. Zaccaria—Giorgione—Allegory, Idyll, Expression of Emotion—The Monk at the Clavichord—Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese—Tintoretto's attempt to dramatise Venetian Art—Veronese's Mundane Splendour—Titian's Sophoclean Harmony—Their Schools—Further Characteristics of Veronese—of Tintoretto—His Imaginative Energy—Predominant Poetry—Titian's Perfection of Balance—Assumption of Madonna—Spirit common to the Great Venetians.

It was a fact of the greatest importance for the development of the fine arts in Italy that painting in Venice reached maturity later than in Florence. Owing to this circumstance one chief aspect of the Renaissance, its material magnificence and freedom, received consummate treatment at the hands of Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese. To idealise the sensualities of the external universe, to achieve for colour what the Florentines had done for form, to invest the worldly grandeur of human life at one of its most gorgeous epochs with the dignity of the highest art, was what these great artists were called on to accomplish. Their task could not have been so worthily performed in the fifteenth century as in the sixteenth, if the development of the æsthetic sense had been more premature among the Venetians.

Venice was precisely fitted for the part her painters had to play. Free, isolated, wealthy, powerful; famous throughout Europe for the pomp of her state equipage, and for the immorality of her private manners; ruled by a prudent aristocracy, who spent vast wealth on public shows and on the maintenance of a more than imperial civic majesty: Venice, with her pavement of liquid chrysoprase, with her palaces of porphyry and marble, her frescoed façades, her quays and squares aglow with the costumes of the Levant, her lagoons afloat with the galleys of all nations, her churches floored with mosaics, her silvery domes and ceilings glittering with sculpture bathed in molten gold: Venice luxurious in the light and colour of a vaporous atmosphere, where sea-mists rose into the mounded summer clouds; arched over by the broad expanse of sky, bounded only by the horizon of waves and plain and distant mountain ranges, and reflected in all its many hues of sunrise and sunset upon the glassy surface of smooth waters: Venice asleep like a miracle of opal or of pearl upon the bosom of an undulating lake:—here and here only on the face of the whole globe was the unique city wherein the pride of life might combine with the lustre of the physical universe to create and stimulate in the artist a sense of all that was most sumptuous in the pageant of the world of sense.

There is colour in flowers. Gardens of tulips are radiant, and mountain valleys touch the soul with the beauty of their pure and gemlike hues. Therefore the painters of Flanders and of Umbria, John van Eyck and Gentile da Fabriano, penetrated some of the secrets of the world of colour. But what are the purples and scarlets and blues of iris, anemone, or columbine, dispersed among deep meadow grasses or trained in quiet cloister garden-beds, when compared with that melodrama of flame and gold and rose and orange and azure, which the skies and lagoons of Venice yield almost

daily to the eyes? The Venetians had no green fields and trees, no garden borders, no blossoming orchards, to teach them the tender suggestiveness, the quaint poetry of isolated or contrasted tints. Their meadows were the fruitless furrows of the Adriatic, hued like a peacock's neck; they called the pearl-shells of their Lido flowers, *fior di mare*. Nothing distracted their attention from the glories of morning and of evening presented to them by their sea and sky. It was in consequence of this that the Venetians conceived colour heroically, not as a matter of missal-margins or of subordinate decoration, but as a motive worthy in itself of sublime treatment. In like manner, hedged in by no limitary hills, contracted by no city walls, stifled by no narrow streets, but open to the liberal airs of heaven and ocean, the Venetians understood space and imagined pictures almost boundless in their immensity. Light, colour, air, space: those are the elemental conditions of Venetian art; of those the painters weaved their ideal world for beautiful and proud humanity.

Shelley's description of a Venetian sunset strikes the key-note to Venetian painting: [1]—

> As those who pause on some delightful way,
> Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood
> Looking upon the evening and the flood,
> Which lay between the city and the shore,
> Paved with the image of the sky: the hoar
> And airy Alps, towards the north appeared,
> Through mist, a heaven-sustaining bulwark, reared
> Between the east and west; and half the sky
> Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry,

[1] From the beginning of *Julian and Maddalo*, which relates a ride taken by Shelley with Lord Byron, on the Lido, and their visit to the madhouse on its neighbouring island. The description, richly coloured and somewhat confused in detail, seems to me peculiarly true to Venetian scenery. With the exception of Tunis, I know of no such theatre for sunset-shows as Venice. Tunis has the same elements of broad lagoons and distant hills, but not the same vaporous atmosphere.

Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
Down the steep west into a wondrous hue
Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent
Among the many-folded hills—they were
Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,
As seen from Lido through the harbour piles,
The likeness of a clump of peakèd isles—
And then, as if the earth and sea had been
Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen
Those mountains towering, as from waves of flame,
Around the vaporous sun, from which there came
The inmost purple spirit of light, and made
Their very peaks transparent. 'Ere it fade,'
Said my companion, 'I will show you soon
A better station.' So, o'er the lagune
We glided: and from that funereal bark
I leaned, and saw the city; and could mark
How from their many isles, in evening's gleam,
Its temples and its palaces did seem
Like fabrics of enchantment piled to heaven.

With this we may compare the following extract from a letter, addressed in May 1544 to Titian, by one of the most unprincipled of literary bandits who have ever disgraced humanity, but who nevertheless was solemnised to the spirit of true poetry by the grandiose aspect of nature as it appeared to him in Venice. That Pietro Aretino should have so deeply felt the charm of natural beauty in an age when even the greatest artists and poets sought inspiration in human life rather than the outer world, is a significant fact. It seems to illustrate the necessity whereby Venice became the cradle of the art of nature.[1] 'Having, dear Sir, and my best gossip, supped alone to the injury of my custom, or, to speak more truly, supped in the company of all the boredoms of a

[1] *Lettere di Messer Pietro Aretino*, Parigi, MDCIX, lib. iii. p. 48. I have made a paraphrase rather than a translation of this rare and curious description.

cursed quartan fever, which will not let me taste the flavour of any food, I rose from table sated with the same disgust with which I had sat down to it. In this mood I went and leaned my arms upon the sill outside my window, and throwing my chest and nearly all my body on the marble, abandoned myself to the contemplation of the spectacle presented by the innumerable boats, filled with foreigners as well as people of the city, which gave delight not merely to the gazers, but also to the Grand Canal itself, that perpetual delight of all who plough its waters. From this animated scene, all of a sudden, like one who from mere *ennui* knows not how to occupy his mind, I turned my eyes to heaven, which, from the moment when God made it, was never adorned with such painted loveliness of lights and shadows. The whole region of the air was what those who envy you, because they are unable to be you, would fain express. To begin with, the buildings of Venice, though of solid stone, seemed made of some ethereal substance. Then the sky was full of variety—here clear and ardent, there dulled and overclouded. What marvellous clouds there were! Masses of them in the centre of the scene hung above the house-roofs, while the immediate part was formed of a grey tint inclining to dark. I gazed astonished at the varied colours they displayed. The nearer masses burned with flames of sunset; the more remote blushed with a blaze of crimson less afire. Oh, how splendidly did Nature's pencil treat and dispose that airy landscape, keeping the sky apart from the palaces, just as Titian does! On one side the heavens showed a greenish-blue, on another a bluish-green, invented verily by the caprice of Nature, who is mistress of the greatest masters. With her lights and her darks, there she was harmonising, toning, and bringing out into relief, just as she wished. Seeing which, I who know that your pencil is the spirit of

her inmost soul, cried aloud thrice or four times, "Oh, Titian! where are you now?"'

In order to understand the destiny of Venice in art, it is not enough to concentrate attention on the peculiarities of her physical environment. Potent as these were in the creation of her style, the political and social conditions of the Republic require also to be taken into account. Among Italian cities Venice was unique. She alone was tranquil in her empire, unimpeded in her constitutional development, independent of Church interference, undisturbed by the cross purposes and intrigues of the Despots, inhabited by merchants who were princes, and by a free-born people who had never seen war at their gates. The serenity of undisturbed security, the luxury of wealth amassed abroad and liberally spent at home, gave a physiognomy of ease and proud self-confidence to all her edifices. The grim and anxious struggles of the Middle Ages left no mark on Venice. How different was this town from Florence, every inch of whose domain could tell of civic warfare, whose passionate aspirations after independence ended in the despotism of the bourgeois Medici, whose repeated revolutions had slavery for their climax, whose grey palaces bore on their fronts the stamp of mediæval vigilance, whose spirit was incarnated in Dante the exile, whose enslavement forced from Michael Angelo those groans of a chained Titan expressed in the marbles of S. Lorenzo! It is not an insignificant, though a slight, detail, that the predominant colour of Florence is brown, while the predominant colour of Venice is that of mother-of-pearl, concealing within its general whiteness every tint that can be placed upon the palette of a painter. The conditions of Florence stimulated mental energy and turned the forces of the soul inwards. Those of Venice inclined the individual to accept life as he found it. Instead of exciting him to think, they disposed him to enjoy, or to acquire by industry the means of manifold enjoyment. To

represent in art the intellectual strivings of the Renaissance was the task of Florence and her sons; to create a monument of Renaissance magnificence was the task of Venice. Without Venice the modern world could not have produced that flower of sensuous and unreflective loveliness in painting, which is worthy to stand beside the highest product of the Greek genius in sculpture. For Athena from her Parthenon stretches the hand to Venezia enthroned in the ducal palace. The broad brows and earnest eyes of the Hellenic goddess are of one divine birth and lineage with the golden hair and superb carriage of the sea-queen.

It is in the heart of Venice, in the House of the Republic, that the Venetian painters, considered as the interpreters of worldly splendour, fulfilled their function with the most complete success. Centuries contributed to make the Ducal Palace what it is. The massive colonnades and Gothic loggias of the external basement date from the thirteenth century; their sculpture belongs to the age when Niccola Pisano's genius was in the ascendant. The square fabric of the palace, so beautiful in the irregularity of its pointed windows, so singular in its mosaic diaper of pink and white, was designed at the same early period. The inner court and the façade that overhangs the lateral canal, display the handiwork of Sansovino. The halls of the palace—spacious chambers where the Senate assembled, where ambassadors approached the Doge, where the Savi deliberated, where the Council of Ten conducted their inquisition—are walled and roofed with pictures of inestimable value, encased in framework of carved oak, overlaid with burnished gold. Supreme art—the art of the imagination perfected with delicate and skilful care in detail—is made in these proud halls the minister of mundane pomp. In order that the gold brocade of the ducal robes, that the scarlet and crimson of the Venetian senator, might be duly harmonised by the richness of their surroundings, it was necessary that

canvases measured by the square yard, and rendered priceless by the authentic handiwork of Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese, should glow upon the walls and ceilings. A more insolent display of public wealth—a more lavish outpouring of human genius in the service of State pageantry, cannot be imagined.

Sublime over all allegories and histories depicted in those multitudes of paintings, sits Venezia herself enthroned and crowned, the personification of haughtiness and power. Figured as a regal lady, with yellow hair tightly knotted round a small head poised upon her upright throat and ample shoulders, Venice takes her chair of sovereignty—as mistress of the ocean to whom Neptune and the Tritons offer pearls, as empress of the globe at whose footstool wait Justice with the sword and Peace with the olive branch, as a queen of heaven exalted to the clouds. They have made her a goddess, those great painters; they have produced a mythus, and personified in native loveliness that bride of the sea, their love, their lady. The beauty of Venetian women and the glory of Venetian empire find their meeting point in her, and live as the spirit of Athens lived in Pallas Promachos. On every side, above, around, wherever the eye falls in those vast rooms, are seen the deeds of Venice—painted histories of her triumphs over emperors and popes and infidels, or allegories of her greatness—scenes wherein the Doges perform acts of faith, with S. Mark for their protector, and with Venezia for their patroness. The saints in Paradise, massed together by Tintoretto and by Palma, mingle with mythologies of Greece and Rome, and episodes of pure idyllic painting.

Religion in these pictures was a matter of parade, an adjunct to the costly public life of the Republic. We need not, therefore, conclude that it was unreal. Such as it was, the religion of the Venetian masters is indeed as genuine as that of Fra Angelico or Albert Dürer. But it was the faith, not

of humble men or of mystics, not of profound thinkers or ecstatic visionaries, so much as of courtiers and statesmen, of senators and merchants, for whom religion was a function among other functions, not a thing apart, not a source of separate and supreme vitality. Even as Christians, the Venetians lived a life separate from the rest of Italy. Their Church claimed independence of the see of Rome, and the enthusiasm of S. Francis was but faintly felt in the lagoons. Siena in her hour of need dedicated herself to Madonna; Florence in the hour of her regeneration gave herself to Christ; Venice remained under the ensign of the leonine S. Mark. While the cities of Lombardy and Central Italy ran wild with revivalism and religious panics, the Venetians maintained their calm, and never suffered piety to exceed the limits of political prudence. There is, therefore, no mystical exaltation in the faith depicted by her artists. That Tintoretto could have painted the saints in glory—a countless multitude of congregated forms, a sea whereof the waves are souls—as a background for State ceremony, shows the positive and realistic attitude of mind from which the most imaginative of Venetian masters started, when he undertook the most exalted of religious themes. Paradise is a fact, we may fancy Tintoretto reasoned; and it is easier to fill a quarter of an acre of canvas with a picture of Paradise than with any other subject, because the figures can be arranged in concentric tiers round Christ and Madonna in glory.

There is a little sketch by Guardi representing a masked ball in the Council Chamber where the 'Paradise' of Tintoretto fills a wall. The men are in periwigs and long waistcoats; the ladies wear hoops, patches, fans, high heels, and powder. Bowing, promenading, intriguing, exchanging compliments or repartees, they move from point to point; while from the billowy surge of saints, Moses with the table of the law and the Magdalen with her adoring eyes of penitence look down

upon them. Tintoretto could not but have foreseen that the world of living pettiness and passion would perpetually jostle with his world of painted sublimities and sanctities in that vast hall. Yet he did not on that account shrink from the task or fail in its accomplishment. Paradise existed: therefore it could be painted; and he was called upon to paint it here. If the fine gentlemen and ladies below felt out of harmony with the celestial host, so much the worse for them. In this practical spirit the Venetian masters approached religious art, and such was the sphere appointed for it in the pageantry of the Republic. When Paolo Veronese was examined by the Holy Office respecting some supposed irreverence in a sacred picture, his answers clearly proved that in planning it he had thought less of its spiritual significance than of its æsthetic effect.[1]

In the Ducal Palace the Venetian art of the Renaissance culminates; and here we might pause a moment to consider the difference between these paintings and the mediæval frescoes of the Palazzo Pubblico at Siena.[2] The Sienese painters consecrated all their abilities to the expression of thoughts, theories of political self-government in a free State, and devotional ideas. The citizen who read the lesson of the Sala della Pace was instructed in his duties to God and to the State. The Venetian painters, as we have seen, exalted Venice and set forth her acts of power. Their work is a glorification of the Republic; but no doctrine is inculcated, and no system of thought is conveyed to the mind through the eye. Daily pacing the saloons of the palace, Doge and noble were reminded of the greatness of the State they represented. They were not invited to reflect upon the duties of the governor and governed. Their imaginations were dilated and their pride roused by the spectacle of Venice

[1] See Yriarte, *Un Patricien de Venise*, p. 439.

[2] See above, p. 153.

seated like a goddess in her home. Of all the secular States of Italy the Republic of S. Mark's alone produced this mythical ideal of the body politic, self-sustained and independent of the citizens, compelling their allegiance, and sustaining them through generations with the life of its organic unity.[1] The artists had no reason to paint thoughts and theories. It was enough to set forth Venice and to illustrate her acts.

Long before Venetian painting reached a climax in the decorative triumphs of the Ducal Palace, the masters of the school had formed a style expressive of the spirit of the Renaissance, considered as the spirit of free enjoyment and living energy. To trace the history of Venetian painting is to follow through its several stages the growth of that mastery over colour and sensuous beauty which was perfected in the works of Titian and his contemporaries.[2] Under the Vivarini of Murano the Venetian school in its infancy began with a selection from the natural world of all that struck them as most brilliant. No other painters of their age in Italy employed such glowing colours, or showed a more marked predilection for the imitation of fruits, rich stuffs, architectural canopies, jewels, and landscape backgrounds. Their piety, unlike the mysticism of the Sienese and the deep thought of the Florentine masters, is somewhat superficial and conventional. The merit of their devotional pictures consists of simplicity, vivacity, and joyousness. Our Lady and her court of saints seem living and breathing upon earth.

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 183.

[2] I must refer my readers to Crowe and Cavalcaselle for an estimate of the influence exercised at Venice by Gentile de Fabriano, John Alamannus, and the school of Squarcione. Antonello da Messina brought his method of oil-painting into the city in 1470, and Gian Bellini learned something at Padua from Andrea Mantegna. The true point about Venice, however, is that the Venetian character absorbed assimilated, and converted to its own originality whatever touched it.

There is no atmosphere of tranced solemnity surrounding them, like that which gives peculiar meaning to similar works of the Van Eycks and Memling—artists, by the way, who in many important respects are more nearly allied than any others to the spirit of the first age of Venetian painting.[1]

What the Vivarini began, the three Bellini,[2] with Crivelli, Carpaccio, Mansueti, Basaiti, Catena, Cima da Conegliano, Bissolo, Cordegliaghi, continued. Bright costumes, distinct and sunny landscapes, broad backgrounds of architecture, large skies, polished armour, gilded cornices, young faces of fisherboys and country girls,[3] grave faces of old men brown with sea-wind and sunlight, withered faces of women hearty in a hale old age, the strong manhood of Venetian senators, the dignity of patrician ladies, the gracefulness of children, the rosy whiteness and amber-coloured tresses of the daughters of the Adriatic and lagoons—these are the source of inspiration to the Venetians of the second period. Mantegna, a few miles distant, at Padua, was working out his ideal of severely classical design. Yet he scarcely touched the manner of the Venetians with his influence, though Gian Bellini was his brother-in-law and pupil, and though his genius, in grasp of matter and in management of composition, soared above his neighbours. Lionardo da Vinci at Milan was perfecting his problems of psychology in painting, offering to the world solutions of the greatest difficulties in the delineation of the spirit by expression. Yet not a trace of Lionardo's subtle play of light and shadow upon thoughtful features can be

[1] The conditions of art in Flanders—wealthy, bourgeois, proud, free—were not dissimilar to those of art in Venice. The misty flats of Belgium have some of the atmospheric qualities of Venice. As Van Eyck is to the Vivarini, so is Rubens to Paolo Veronese. This expresses the amount of likeness and of difference.

[2] Jacopo and his sons Gentile and Giovanni.

[3] Notice particularly the Contadina type of S. Catherine in a picture ascribed to Cordegliaghi in the Venetian Academy.

discerned in the work of the Bellini. For them the mysteries of the inner and the outer world had no attraction. The externals of a full and vivid existence fascinated their imagination. Their poetry and their piety were alike simple and objective. How to depict the world as it is seen—a miracle of varying lights and melting hues, a pageant substantial to the touch and concrete to the eyes, a combination of forms defined by colours more than outlines—was their task. They did not reach their end by anatomy, analysis, and reconstruction. They undertook to paint just what they felt and saw.

Very instructive are the wall-pictures of this period, painted not in fresco but on canvas by Carpaccio and Gentile Bellini, for the decoration of the Scuole of S. Ursula and S. Croce.[1] Not only do these bring before us the life of Venice in its manifold reality, but they illustrate the tendency of the Venetian masters to express the actual world, rather than to formulate an ideal of the fancy or to search the secrets of the soul. This realism, if the name can be applied to pictures so poetical as those of Carpaccio, is not, like the Florentine realism, hard and scientific. A natural feeling for grace and a sense of romance inspire the artist, and breathe from every figure that he paints. The type of beauty produced is charming by its negligence and *naïveté*; it is not thought out with pains or toilsomely elaborated.[2]

Among the loveliest motives used in the altar-pieces of this period might be mentioned the boy-angels playing flutes and mandolines beneath Madonna on the steps of her throne.

[1] These Scuole were the halls of meeting for companies called by the names of patron saints.

[2] Notice in particular, from the series of pictures illustrating the legend of S. Ursula, the very beautiful faces and figures of the saint herself, and her young bridegroom, the Prince of Britain. Attendant squires and pages in these paintings have all the charm of similar subordinate personages in Pinturicchio, with none of his affectation.

There are usually three of them, seated, or sometimes standing. They hold their instruments of music as though they had just ceased from singing, and were ready to recommence at the pleasure of their mistress. Meanwhile there is a silence in the celestial company, through which the still voice of the praying heart is heard, a silence corresponding to the hushed mood of the worshipper.[1] The children are accustomed to the holy place; therefore their attitudes are both reverent and natural. They are more earthly than Fra Angelico's melodists, and yet they are not precisely of human lineage. It is not, perhaps, too much to say that they strike the keynote of Venetian devotion, at once real and devoid of pietistic rapture.

Gian Bellini brought the art of this second period to completion. In his sacred pictures the reverential spirit of early Italian painting is combined with a feeling for colour and a dexterity in its manipulation peculiar to Venice. Bellini cannot be called a master of the full Renaissance. He falls into the same class as Francia and Perugino, who adhered to *quattrocento* modes of thought and sentiment, while attaining at isolated points to the freedom of the Renaissance. In him the colourists of the next age found an absolute teacher; no one has surpassed him in the difficult art of giving tone to pure tints in combination. There is a picture of Bellini's in S. Zaccaria at Venice—Madonna enthroned with Saints—where the skill of the colourist may be said to culminate in unsurpassable perfection. The whole painting is bathed in a soft but luminous haze of gold; yet each figure has its individuality of treatment, the glowing fire of S. Peter contrasting with the pearly coolness of the drapery and flesh-

[1] The most beautiful of these *angiolini*, with long flakes of flaxen hair falling from their foreheads, are in a Sacra Conversazione of Carpaccio's in the Academy. Gian Bellini's, in many similar pictures, are of the same delicacy.

tints of the Magdalen. No brush-work is perceptible Surface and substance have been elaborated into one harmonious richness that defies analysis. Between this picture, so strong in its smoothness, and any masterpiece of Velasquez, so rugged in its strength, what a wide abyss of inadequate half-achievement, of smooth feebleness and feeble ruggedness, exists!

Giorgione, did we but possess enough of his authentic works to judge by, would be found the first painter of the true Renaissance among the Venetians, the inaugurator of the third and great period.[1] He died at the age of thirty-six, the inheritor of unfulfilled renown. Time has destroyed the last vestige of his frescoes. Criticism has reduced the number of his genuine easel pictures to half a dozen. He exists as a great name. The part he played in the development of Venetian art was similar to that of Marlowe in the history of our drama. He first cut painting altogether adrift from mediæval moorings, and launched it on the waves of the Renaissance liberty. While equal as a colourist to Bellini, though in a different and more sensuous region, Giorgione, by the variety and inventiveness of his conception, proved himself a painter of the calibre of Titian. Sacred subjects he seems to have but rarely treated, unless such purely idyllic pictures as the 'Finding of Moses' in the Uffizzi, and the 'Meeting of Jacob and Rachel' at Dresden deserve the name. Allegories of deep and problematic meaning, the key whereof has to be found in states of the emotion rather than in thoughts, delighted him. He may be said to have invented the Venetian species of romance picture, where an episode in a novella forms the motive of the painting.[2] Nor was he

[1] What follows above about Giorgione is advanced with diffidence, since the name of no other great painter has been so freely used to cover the works of his inferiors.

[2] Lord Lansdowne's Giorgionesque picture of a young man crowned with vine, playing and singing to two girls in a garden, for example.

deficient in tragic power, as the tremendous study for a Lucrece in the Uffizzi collection sufficiently proves. In his drawings he models the form without outline by massive distribution of light and dark. In style they are the very opposite of Lionardo's clearly defined studies touched with the metal point upon prepared paper. They suggest colouring, and are indeed the designs of a great colourist, who saw things under the conditions of their tints and tone.

Of the undisputed pictures by Giorgione, the grandest is the 'Monk at the Clavichord,' in the Pitti Palace at Florence.[1] The young man has his fingers on the keys; he is modulating in a mood of grave and sustained emotion; his head is turned away towards an old man standing near him. On the other side of the instrument is a boy. These two figures are but foils and adjuncts to the musician in the middle; and the whole interest of his face lies in its concentrated feeling—the very soul of music, as expressed in Mr. Robert Browning's 'Abt Vogler,' passing through his eyes. This power of painting the portrait of an emotion, of depicting by the features a deep and powerful but tranquil moment of the inner life, must have been possessed by Giorgione in an eminent degree. We find it again in the so-called 'Begrüssung' of the Dresden Gallery.[2] The picture is a large landscape. Jacob

The celebrated Concert of the Louvre Gallery, so charming for its landscape and so voluptuous in its dreamy sense of Arcadian luxury, is given by Crowe and Cavalcaselle to an imitator of Sebastian del Piombo. See *History of Painting in North Italy*, vol. ii. p. 147.

[1] Under the fire of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's destructive criticism, it would require more real courage than I possess to speak of the 'Entombment' in the Monte di Pietà at Treviso as genuine. Coarse and unselect as are the types of the boy angels, as well as of the young athletic giant, who plays the part in it of the dead Christ, this is a truly grandiose and striking picture. Nothing proves the average greatness of the Venetian masters more than the possibility of attributing such compositions to obscure and subordinate craftsmen of the school.

[2] Crowe and Cavalcaselle assign this picture with some confidence and with fair show of reason, to Cariani, on whom again they father the

and Rachel meet and salute each other with a kiss. But the shepherd lying beneath the shadow of a chestnut tree beside a well has a whole Arcadia of intense yearning in the eyes of sympathy he fixes on the lovers. Something of this faculty, it may be said in passing, descended to Bonifazio, whose romance pictures are among the most charming products of Venetian art, and one of whose singing women in the feast of Dives has the Giorgionesque fulness of inner feeling.

Fate has dealt less unkindly with Titian, Tintoret, and Veronese than with Giorgione. The works of these artists, in whom the Venetian Renaissance attained completion, have been preserved in large numbers and in excellent condition. Chronologically speaking, Titian, the contemporary of Giorgione, precedes Tintoretto, and Tintoretto is somewhat earlier than Veronese.[1] But for the purpose of criticism the three painters may be considered together as the representatives of three marked aspects in the fully developed Venetian style.

Tintoretto, called by the Italians the thunderbolt of painting, because of his vehement impulsiveness and rapidity of execution, soars above his brethren by the faculty of pure imagination. It was he who brought to its perfection the poetry of *chiaroscuro*, expressing moods of passion and emotion by brusque lights, luminous half-shadows, and semi-opaque darkness, no less unmistakably than Beethoven by symphonic modulations. He too engrafted on the calm and natural Venetian manner something of the Michael Angelesque sublimity, and sought to vary by dramatic movement the romantic motives of his school. In his work, more than in

frescoes at Colleoni's Castle of Malpaga. I have ventured to notice it above in connection with Giorgione, since it exhibits some of the most striking Giorgionesque qualities, and shows the ascendency of his imagination over the Venetian School.

[1] Giorgione, b. 1478; d. 1511. Titian, b. 1477, d. 1576. Tintoretto, b. 1512; d. 1594. Veronese, b. 1530; d. 1588.

that of his contemporaries, Venetian art ceased to be decorative and idyllic.

Veronese elevated pageantry to the height of serious art. His domain is noonday sunlight ablaze on sumptuous dresses and Palladian architecture. Where Tintoretto is dramatic, he is scenic. Titian, in a wise harmony, without either the Æschylean fury of Tintoretto, or the material gorgeousness of Veronese, realised an ideal of pure beauty. Continuing the traditions of Bellini and Giorgione, with a breadth of treatment, and a vigour of well-balanced faculties peculiar to himself, Titian gave to colour in landscape and the human form a sublime yet sensuous poetry no other painter in the world has reached.

Tintoretto and Veronese are, both of them, excessive. The imagination of Tintoretto is too passionate and daring; it scathes and blinds like lightning. The sense of splendour in Veronese is overpoweringly pompous. Titian's exquisite humanity, his large and sane nature, gives proper value to the imaginative and the scenic elements of the Venetian style, without exaggerating either. In his masterpieces thought, colour, sentiment, and composition—the spiritual and technical elements of art—exist in perfect balance; one harmonious tone is given to all the parts of his production, nor can it be said that any quality asserts itself to the injury of the rest. Titian, the Sophocles of painting, has infused into his pictures the spirit of music, the Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders, making power incarnate in a form of grace.

Round these great men are grouped a host of secondary but distinguished painters—Palma with his golden-haired large-bosomed sirens; idyllic Bonifazio; dramatic Pordenone, whose frescoes are all motion and excitement; Paris Bordone, who mingled on his canvas cream and mulberry juice and sunbeams; the Robusti, the Caliari, the Bassani, and others

whom it would be tedious to mention. One breath, one afflatus, inspired them all; and it is due to this coherence in their style and inspiration that the school of Venice, taken as a whole, can show more masterpieces by artists of the second class than any other in Italy. Superior or inferior as they may relatively be among themselves, each bears the indubitable stamp of the Venetian Renaissance, and produces work of a quality that raises him to high rank among the painters of the world. In the same way the spirit of the Renaissance, passing over the dramatists of our Elizabethan age, enabled intellects of average force to take rank in the company of the noblest. Ford, Massinger, Heywood, Decker, Webster, Fletcher, Tourneur, Marston, are seated round the throne at the feet of Shakspere, Marlowe, and Jonson.

In order to penetrate the characteristics of Venetian art more thoroughly, it will be needful to enter into detailed criticism of the three chief masters who command the school. To begin with Veronese. His canvases are nearly always large—filled with figures of the size of life, massed together in groups or extended in long lines beneath white marble colonnades, which enclose spaces of clear sky and silvery clouds. Armour, shot silks and satins, brocaded canopies, banners, plate, fruit, sceptres, crowns, all things, in fact, that burn and glitter in the sun, form the habitual furniture of his pictures. Rearing horses, dogs, dwarfs, cats, when occasion serves, are used to add reality, vivacity, grotesqueness to his scenes. His men and women are large, well proportioned, vigorous—eminent for pose and gesture rather than for grace or loveliness—distinguished by adult more than adolescent qualities.

Veronese has no choice type of beauty for either sex. We find in him, on the contrary, a somewhat coarse display of animal force in men, and of superb voluptuousness in women. He prefers to paint women draped in gorgeous

raiment, as if he had not felt the beauty of the nude. Their faces are too frequently unrefined and empty of expression. His noblest creatures are men of about twenty-five, manly, brawny, crisp-haired, full of nerve and blood. In all this Veronese resembles Rubens. But he does not, like Rubens, strike us as gross, sensual, fleshly;[1] he remains proud, powerful, and frigidly materialistic. He raises neither repulsion nor desire, but displays with the calm strength of art the empire of the mundane spirit. All the equipage of wealth and worldliness, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life—such a vision as the fiend offered to Christ on the mountain of temptation; this is Veronese's realm. Again, he has no flashes of poetic imagination like Tintoretto; but his grip on the realities of the world, his faculty for idealising prosaic magnificence, is even greater.

Veronese was precisely the painter suited to a nation of merchants, in whom the associations of the counting-house and the exchange mingled with the responsibilities of the Senate and the passions of princes. He never portrayed vehement emotions. There are no brusque movements, no extended arms, like those of Tintoretto's Magdalen in the 'Pietà' at Milan, in his pictures. His Christs and Maries and martyrs of all sorts are composed, serious, courtly, well-fed personages, who, like people of the world accidentally overtaken by some tragic misfortune, do not stoop to distortions or express more than a grave surprise, a decorous sense of pain.[2] His angelic beings are equally earthly.

The Venetian Rothschilds no doubt preferred the ceremonial to the imaginative treatment of sacred themes; and to do him justice, Veronese did not make what would in his

[1] I cannot, for example, imagine Veronese painting anything like Rubens' two pictures of the 'Last Judgment' at Munich.

[2] For his sacred types see the 'Marriage at Cana' in the Louvre, the little 'Crucifixion' and the 'Baptism' of the Pitti, and the 'Martyrdom of S. Agata' in the Uffizzi.

case have been the mistake of choosing the tragedies of the Bible for representation. It is the story of Esther, with its royal audiences, coronations, and processions; the marriage feast at Cana; the banquet in the house of Levi, that he selects by preference. Even these themes he removes into a region far from Biblical associations. His *mise en scene* is invariably borrowed from luxurious Italian palaces—large open courts and *loggie*, crowded with guests and lacqueys—tables profusely laden with gold and silver plate. The same love of display led him to delight in allegory—not allegory of the deep and mystic kind, but of the pompous and processional, in which Venice appears enthroned among the deities, or Jupiter fulminates against the vices, or the genii of the arts are personified as handsome women and blooming boys. In dealing with mythology, again, it is not its poetry that he touches; he uses the tale of Europa, for example, as the motive for rich toilettes and delightful landscape, choosing the moment that has least in it of pathos. These being the prominent features of his style, it remains to be said that what is really great in Veronese is the sobriety of his imagination and the solidity of his workmanship. Amid so much that is distracting, he never loses command over his subject; nor does he degenerate into fulsome rhetoric.

Tintoretto is not at home in this somewhat vulgar region of ceremonial grandeur. He requires both thought and fancy as the stimulus to his creative effort. He cannot be satisfied with reproducing, even in the noblest combinations, merely what he sees around him of resplendent and magnificent. There must be scope for poetry in the conception and for audacity in the projection of his subject, something that shall rouse the prophetic faculty and evoke the seer in the artist, or Tintoretto does not rise to his own altitude. Accordingly we find that, in contrast with Veronese, he selects by preference the most tragic and dramatic subjects to be found in

sacred history. The Crucifixion, with its agonising deity and prostrate groups of women, sunk below the grief of tears;—the Temptation in the wilderness, with its passionate contrast of the grey-robed Man of Sorrows and the ruby-winged, voluptuous fiend;—the Temptation of Adam in Eden, a glowing allegory of the fascination of the spirit by the flesh;—Paradise, a tempest of souls, whirled like Lucretian atoms or gold dust in sunbeams by the celestial forces that perform the movement of the spheres;—the Destruction of the world, where all the fountains and rivers and lakes and seas of earth have formed one cataract, that thunders with cities and nations on its rapids down a bottomless gulf; while all the winds and hurricanes of the air have grown into one blast, that carries men like dead leaves up to judgment;—the Plague of the fiery serpents, with multitudes encoiled and writhing on a burning waste of sand;—the Massacre of the Innocents, with its spilth of blood on slippery pavements of porphyry and serpentine;—the Delivery of the tables of the law to Moses amid clouds on Sinai, a white ascetic, lightning-smitten man emerging in the glory of apparent godhead;—the anguish of the Magdalen above her martyred God;—the solemn silence of Christ before the throne of Pilate;—the rushing of the wings of Seraphim, and the clangour of the trumpet that awakes the dead;—these are the soul-stirring themes that Tintoretto handles with the ease of mastery.[1]

Meditating upon Tintoretto's choice of such subjects, we feel that the profoundest characteristic of his genius is the determination toward motives pre-eminently poetic rather than proper to the figurative arts. The poet imagines a situation in which the intellectual or emotional life is paramount, and the body is subordinate. The painter selects

[1] These examples are mostly chosen from the Scuola di S. Rocco and the church of S. Maria dell' Orto at Venice; also from 'Pietàs,' in the Brera and the Pitti, the 'Paradise' of the Ducal Palace, and a sketch for 'Paradise' in the Louvre.

situations in which physical form is of the first importance, and a feeling or a thought is suggested. But Tintoretto grapples immediately with poetical ideas; and he often fails to realise them fully through the inadequacy of painting as a medium for such matter. Moses, in the drama of the 'Golden Calf,' for instance, is a poem, not a true picture.[1] The pale ecstatic stretching out emaciated arms, presents no beauty of attitude or outline. Energy of thought is conspicuous in the figure; and reflection is needed to bring out the purpose of the painter.[2]

It is not, however, only in the region of the vast, tempestuous, and tragic that Tintoretto finds himself at home. He is equal to every task that can be imposed upon the imagination. Provided only that the spiritual fount be stirred, the jet of living water gushes forth, pure, inexhaustible, and limpid. In his 'Marriage of Bacchus and Ariadne,' that most perfect lyric of the sensuous fancy from which sensuality is absent;[3] in his 'Temptation of Adam,' that symphony of grey and brown and ivory more lustrous than the hues of sunset; in his 'Miracle of S. Agnes,' that lamb-like maiden with her snow-white lamb among the soldiers and the priests of Rome, Tintoretto has proved beyond all question that the

[1] S. Maria dell' Orto.

[2] What is here said about Tintoretto is also true of Michael Angelo. His sculpture in S. Lorenzo, compared with Greek sculpture, the norm and canon of the perfect in that art, may be called an invasion of the realm of poetry or music.

[3] There are probably not few of my readers who, after seeing this painting in the Ducal Palace, will agree with me that it is, if not the greatest, at any rate the most beautiful, oil picture in existence. In no other picture has a poem of feeling and of fancy, a romance of varied lights and shades, a symphony of delicately blended hues, a play of attitude and movement transitory but in no sense forced or violent, been more successfully expressed by means more simple or with effect more satisfying. Something of the mythopœic faculty must have survived in Tintoretto, and enabled him to inspire the Greek tale with this intense vitality of beauty.

fiery genius of Titanic artists can pierce and irradiate the placid and the tender secrets of the soul with more consummate mastery than falls to the lot of those who make tranquillity their special province.[1]

Paolo Veronese never penetrated to this inner shrine of beauty, this Holiest of Holies where the spiritual graces dwell. He could not paint waxen limbs, with silver lights and golden and transparent mysteries of shadow, like those of Bacchus, Eve, and Ariadne. Titian himself was powerless to imagine movement like that of Aphrodite floating in the air, or of Madonna adjuring Christ in the 'Paradiso,' or of Christ Himself judging by the silent simplicity of his divine attitude the worldly judge at whose tribunal He stands, or of the tempter raising his jewelled arms aloft to dazzle with meretricious brilliancy the impassive God above him, or of Eve leaning in irresistible seductiveness against the fatal tree, or of S. Mark down-rushing through the sky to save the slave that cried to him, or of the Mary who has fallen asleep with folded hands from utter lassitude of agony at the foot of the cross.

It is in these attitudes, movements, gestures, that Tintoretto makes the human form an index and symbol of the profoundest, most tragic, most delicious thought and feeling of the inmost soul. In daylight radiancy and equable colouring he is surpassed perhaps by Veronese. In mastery of every portion of his art, in solidity of execution, and in unwavering hold upon his subject, he falls below the level of Titian. Many of his pictures are unworthy of his genius—hurriedly designed, rapidly dashed upon the canvas, studied by candlelight from artificial models, with abnormal effects of light and dark, hastily daubed with pigments that have not stood the test of time. He was a gigantic *improvisatore*:

[1] The first of these pictures is in the Ducal Palace, the other two in the Academy at Venice.

that is the worst thing we can say of him. But in the swift intuitions of the imagination, in the purities and sublimities of the prophet-poet's soul, neither Veronese nor yet even Titian can approach him.

The greatest difficulty meets the critic who attempts to speak of Titian. To seize the salient characteristics of an artist whose glory it is to offer nothing over-prominent, and who keeps the middle path of perfection, is impossible. As complete health may be termed the absence of obtrusive sensation, as virtue has been called the just proportion between two opposite extravagances, so is Titian's art a golden mean of joy unbroken by brusque movements of the passions—a well-tempered harmony in which no thrilling note suggests the possibility of discord. In his work the world and men cease to be merely what they are; he makes them what they ought to be: and this he does by separating what is beautiful in sensuous life from its alloy of painful meditation and of burdensome endeavour. The disease of thought is unknown in his kingdom; no divisions exist between the spirit and the flesh; the will is thwarted by no obstacles. When we think of Titian, we are irresistibly led to think of music. His 'Assumption of Madonna' (the greatest single oil-painting in the world, if we except Raphael's 'Madonna di San Sisto') can best be described as a symphony—a symphony of colour, where every hue is brought into harmonious combination—a symphony of movement, where every line contributes to melodious rhythm—a symphony of light without a cloud—a symphony of joy in which the heavens and earth sing Hallelujah. Tintoretto, in the Scuola di San Rocco, painted an 'Assumption of the Virgin' with characteristic energy and impulsiveness. A group of agitated men around an open tomb, a rush of air and clash of seraph wings above, a blaze of glory, a woman borne with sideways-swaying figure from darkness into light;—that is his picture, all *brio*, excitement,

speed. Quickly conceived, hastily executed, this painting (so far as clumsy restoration suffers us to judge) bears the impress of its author's impetuous genius. But Titian worked by a different method. On the earth, among the Apostles, there is action enough and passion; ardent faces straining upward, impatient men raising impotent arms and vainly divesting themselves of their mantles, as though they too might follow her they love. In heaven is radiance, half eclipsing the archangel who holds the crown, and revealing the father of spirits in an aureole of golden fire. Between earth and heaven, amid choirs of angelic children, rises the mighty mother of the faith of Christ, who was Mary and is now a goddess, ecstatic yet tranquil, not yet accustomed to the skies, but far above the grossness and the incapacities of earth. Her womanhood is so complete that those for whom the meaning of her Catholic legend is lost, may hail in her humanity personified.

The grand manner can reach no further than in this picture—serene, composed, meditated, enduring, yet full of dramatic force and of profound feeling. Whatever Titian chose to touch, whether it was classical mythology or portrait, history or sacred subject, he treated in this large and healthful style. It is easy to tire of Veronese; it is possible to be fatigued by Tintoretto. Titian, like nature, waits not for moods or humours in the spectator. He gives to the mind joy of which it can never weary, pleasures that cannot satiate, a satisfaction not to be repented of, a sweetness that will not pall. The least instructed and the simple feel his influence as strongly as the wise or learned.

In the course of this attempt to describe the specific qualities of Tintoretto, Veronese, and Titian, I have been more at pains to distinguish differences than to point out similarities. What they had in common was the Renaissance spirit as this formed itself in Venice. Nowhere in Italy was

art more wholly emancipated from obedience to ecclesiastical traditions, without losing the character of genial and natural piety. Nowhere was the Christian history treated with a more vivid realism, harmonised more simply with pagan mythology, or more completely purged of mysticism. The Umbrian devotion felt by Raphael in his boyhood, the prophecy of Savonarola, and the Platonism of Ficino absorbed by Michael Angelo at Florence, the scientific preoccupations of Lionardo and the antiquarian interests of Mantegna, were all alike unknown at Venice. Among the Venetian painters there was no conflict between art and religion, or art and curiosity—no reaction against previous pietism, no perplexity of conscience, no confusion of aims. Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese were children of the people, men of the world, men of pleasure; wealthy, urbane, independent, pious:—they were all these by turns; but they were never mystics, scholars, or philosophers. In their æsthetic ideal religion found a place, nor was sensuality rejected; but the religion was sane and manly, the sensuality was vigorous and virile. Not the intellectual greatness of the Renaissance, but its happiness and freedom, was what they represented.

CHAPTER VIII

LIFE OF MICHAEL ANGELO

Contrast of Michael Angelo and Cellini—Parentage and Boyhood of Michael Angelo—Work with Ghirlandajo—Gardens of S. Marco—The Medicean Circle—Early Essays in Sculpture—Visit to Bologna—First Visit to Rome—The 'Pietà' of S. Peter's—Michael Angelo as a Patriot and a Friend of the Medici—Cartoon for the Battle of Pisa—Michael Angelo and Julius II.—The Tragedy of the Tomb—Design for the Pope's Mausoleum—Visit to Carrara—Flight from Rome—Michael Angelo at Bologna—Bronze Statue of Julius—Return to Rome—Ceiling of the Sistine Chapel—Greek and Modern Art—Raphael—Michael Angelo and Leo X.—S. Lorenzo—The new Sacristy—Circumstances under which it was designed and partly finished—Meaning of the Allegories—Incomplete state of Michael Angelo's Marbles—Paul III.—The 'Last Judgment'—Critiques of Contemporaries—The Dome of S. Peter's—Vittoria Colonna—Tommaso Cavalieri—Personal Habits of Michael Angelo—His Emotional Nature—Last Illness.

THE life of Italian artists at the time of the Renaissance may be illustrated by two biographies. Michael Angelo Buonarroti and Benvenuto Cellini were almost opposite in all they thought and felt, experienced and aimed at. The one impressed his own strong personality on art; the other reflected the light and shadow of the age in the record of his manifold existence. Cellini hovered, like some strong-winged creature, on the surface of human activity, yielding himself to every impulse, seeking every pleasure, and of beauty feeling only the rude animal compulsion. Deep philosophic thoughts, ideas of death and judgment, the stern struggles of the soul, encompassed Michael Angelo; the service

of beauty was with him religion. Cellini was the creature of the moment—the glass and mirror of corrupt, enslaved, yet still resplendent Italy. In Michael Angelo the genius of the Renaissance culminated; but his character was rather that of an austere Republican, free and solitary amid the multitudes of slaves and courtiers. Michael Angelo made art the vehicle of lofty and soul-shaking thought. Cellini brought the fervour of an inexhaustibly active nature to the service of sensuality, and taught his art to be the handmaid of a soulless paganism. In these two men, therefore, we study two aspects of their age. How far both were exceptional, need not here be questioned; since their singularity consists not so much in being different from other Italians of the sixteenth century as in concentrating qualities elsewhere scattered and imperfect.

Michael Angelo was born in 1475 at Caprese, among the mountains of the Casentino, where his father Lodovico held the office of Podestà. His ancestry was honourable: the Buonarroti even claimed descent, but apparently without due reason, from the princely house of Canossa.[1] His mother gave him to be suckled by a stone-cutter's wife at Settignano, so that in after days he used to say that he had drawn in the love of chisels and mallets with his nurse's milk. As he grew, the boy developed an invincible determination towards the arts. Lodovico from motives of pride and prudence opposed his wishes, but without success. Michael Angelo made friends with the lad Granacci, who was apprenticed to Domenico Ghirlandajo, and at last induced his father to sign articles for him to the same painter. In Ghirlandajo's workshop he learned the rudiments of art, helping in the execution of the frescoes at S. Maria Novella, until such

[1] See Vasari, vol. xii. p. 333, and Gotti's *Vita di Michelangelo Buonarroti*, vol. i. p. 4, for a discussion of this claim, and for a letter written by Alessandro Count of Canossa, in 1520, to the artist.

time as the pupil proved his superiority as a draughtsman to his teacher. The rupture between Michael Angelo and Ghirlandajo might be compared with that between Beethoven and Haydn. In both cases a proud, uncompromising, somewhat scornful student sought aid from a master great in his own line but inferior in fire and originality of genius.[1] In both cases the moment came when pupil and teacher perceived that the eagle could no longer be confined within the hawk's nest, and that henceforth it must sweep the skies alone. After leaving Ghirlandajo's *bottega* at the age of sixteen, Michael Angelo did in truth thenceforward through his life pursue his art alone. Granacci procured him an introduction to the Medici, and the two friends together frequented those gardens of S. Marco where Lorenzo had placed his collection of antiquities. There the youth discovered his vocation. Having begged a piece of marble and a chisel, he struck out the Faun's mask that still is seen in the Bargello. It is worth noticing that Michael Angelo seems to have done no merely prentice-work. Not a fragment of his labour from the earliest to the latest was insignificant, and only such thoughts as he committed to the perishable materials of bronze or paper have been lost. There was nothing tentative in his genius. Into art, as into a rich land, he came and conquered. In like manner, the first sonnet composed by Dante is scarcely less precious than the last lines of the 'Paradiso.' This is true of all the highest artistic natures, who need no preparations and have no period of groping.

[1] That Michael Angelo was contemptuous to brother artists, is proved by what Torrigiani said to Cellini: 'Aveva per usanza di uccellare tutti quelli che dissegnavano.' He called Perugino *goffo*, told Francia's son that his father made handsomer men by night than by day, and cast in Lionardo's teeth that he could not finish the equestrian statue of the Duke of Milan. It is therefore not improbable that when, according to the legend, he corrected a drawing of Ghirlandajo's, he may have said things unendurable to the elder painter.

Lorenzo de' Medici discerned in Michael Angelo a youth of eminent genius, and took the lad into his own household. The astonished father found himself suddenly provided with a comfortable post and courted for the sake of the young sculptor. In Lorenzo's palace the real education of Michael Angelo began. He sat at the same table with Ficino, Pico, and Poliziano, listening to dialogues on Plato and drinking in the golden poetry of Greece. Greek literature and philosophy, expounded by the men who had discovered them, and who were no less proud of their discovery than Columbus of his passage to the Indies, first moulded his mind to those lofty thoughts which it became the task of his life to express in form. At the same time he heard the preaching of Savonarola. In the Duomo and the cloister of S. Marco another portion of his soul was touched, and he acquired that deep religious tone which gives its majesty and terror to the Sistine. Much in the same way was Milton educated by the classics in conjunction with the Scriptures. Both of these austere natures assimilated from pagan art and Jewish prophecy the twofold elements they needed for their own imaginative life. Both Michael Angelo and Milton, in spite of their parade of classic style, were separated from the Greek world by a gulf of Hebrew and of Christian feeling.

While Michael Angelo was thus engaged in studying antique sculpture and in listening to Pico and Savonarola, he carved his first bas-relief—a 'Battle of Hercules with the Centaurs,' suggested to him by Poliziano.[1] Meantime Lorenzo died. His successor Piero set the young man, it is said, to model a snow statue, and then melted like a shape of snow himself down from his pedestal of power in Florence. Upon the expulsion of the tyrant and the proclamation of the new republic, it was dangerous for house-friends of the Casa

[1] Engraved in outline in Harford's *Illustrations of the Genius of Michael Angelo Buonarroti*, Colnaghi, 1857.

Medici to be seen in the city. Michael Angelo therefore, made his way to Bologna, where he spent some months in the palace of Gian Francesco Aldovrandini, studying Dante and working at an angel for the shrine of S. Dominic. As soon, however, as it seemed safe to do so, he returned to Florence; and to this period belongs the statue of the 'Sleeping Cupid,' which was sold as an antique to the Cardinal Raffaello Riario.

A dispute about the price of this 'Cupid' took Michael Angelo in 1496 to Rome, where it was destined that the greater portion of his life should be spent, and his noblest works of art should be produced. Here, while the Borgias were turning the Vatican into a den of thieves and harlots, he executed the purest of all his statues—a 'Pietà' in marble.[1] Christ is lying dead upon his mother's knees. With her right arm she supports his shoulders; her left hand is gently raised as though to say, 'Behold and see!' All that art can do to make death beautiful and grief sublime, is achieved in this masterpiece, which was never surpassed by Michael Angelo in later years. Already, at the age of four-and-twenty, he had matured his 'terrible manner.' Already were invented in his brain that race of superhuman beings, who became the hieroglyphs of his impassioned utterance. Madonna has the small head and heroic torso used by this master to symbolise force. We feel she has no difficulty in holding the dead Christ upon her ample lap and in her powerful arms. Yet while the 'Pietà' is wholly Michael Angelesque, we find no lack of repose, none of those contorted lines that are commonly urged against his manner. It is a sober and harmonious composition, combining the profoundest religious feeling with classical tranquillity of expression. Again, though the group is forcibly original,

[1] This group, placed in S. Peter's, was made for the French Cardinal de Saint Denys. It should be said that the first work of Michael Angelo in Rome was the 'Bacchus' now in the Florentine Bargello, executed for Jacopo Gallo, a Roman gentleman.

this effect of originality is produced, as in all the best work of the golden age, not by new and startling conception, but by the handling of an old and well-worn motive with the grandeur of consummate style. What the genius of Italian sculpture had for generations been striving after, finds its perfect realisation here. It was precisely by thus crowning the endeavours of antecedent artists—by bringing the opening buds of painting and sculpture to full blossom, and exhausting the resources of a long sustained and common inspiration, that the great masters proved their supremacy and rendered an advance beyond their vantage ground impossible. To those who saw and comprehended this 'Pietà' in 1500, it must have been evident that a new power of portraying the very soul had been manifested in sculpture—a power unknown to the Greeks because it lay outside the sphere of their spiritual experience, and unknown to modern artists because it was beyond their faculties of execution and conception. Yet who in Rome, among the courtiers of the Borgias, had brain or heart to understand these things?

In 1501 Michael Angelo returned to Florence, where he stayed until the year 1505. This period was fruitful of results on which his after fame depended. The great statue of 'David,' the two unfinished medallions of Madonna in relief, the 'Holy Family of the Tribune' painted for Angelo Doni, and the Cartoon of the 'Battle of Pisa' were now produced; and no man's name, not even Lionardo's, stood higher in esteem thenceforward. It will be remembered that Savonarola was now dead, but that his constitution still existed under the presidency of Pietro Soderini—the *non mai abbastanza lodato Cavaliere*, as Pitti calls him, the *anima sciocca* of Machiavelli's epigram.[1] Since Michael Angelo at this time was employed

[1] Pitti approved of the form of government represented by Soderini. Machiavelli despised the want of decision that made him quit Florence, and the εὐήθεια of the man. Hence their curiously conflicting phrases.

in the service of masters who had superseded his old friends and patrons, it may be well to review here his attitude in general toward the house of Medici. Throughout his lifetime there continued a conflict between the artist and the citizen—the artist owing education and employment to successive members of that house, the citizen resenting their despotism and doing all that in him lay at times to keep them out of Florence. As a patriot, as the student of Dante and the disciple of Savonarola, Michael Angelo detested tyrants.[1] One of his earliest madrigals, conceived as a dialogue between Florence and her exiles, expresses his mind so decidedly that I have ventured to translate it;[2] the exiles first address Florence, and she answers:—

'Lady, for joy of lovers numberless
Thou wast created fair as angels are.
Sure God hath fallen asleep in heaven afar,
When one man calls the boon of many his.
Give back to streaming eyes
The daylight of Thy face, that seems to shun
Those who must live defrauded of their bliss!'

'Vex not your pure desire with tears and sighs;
For he who robs you of my light, hath none.
Dwelling in fear, sin hath no happiness;
Since amid those who love, their joy is less
Whose great desire great plenty still curtails,
Than theirs who, poor, have hope that never fails.'

As an artist, owing his advancement to Lorenzo, he had accepted favours binding him by ties of gratitude to the Medici,

[1] See the chapter entitled 'Della Malitia e pessime Conditioni del Tyranno,' in Savonarola's 'Tractato circa el reggimento e governo della Citta di Firenze composto ad instantia delli excelsi Signori al tempo di Giuliano Salviati, Gonfaloniere di Justitia.' A more terrible picture has never been drawn by any analyst of human vice and cruelty and weakness.

[2] Guasti's edition of the *Rime*, p. 26.

and even involving him in the downfall of their house. For Leo X. he undertook to build the façade of S. Lorenzo and the Laurentian Library. For Clement VII. he began the statues of the Dukes of Urbino and Nemours. Yet, while accepting these commissions from Medicean Popes, he could not keep his tongue from speaking openly against their despotism. After the sack of Prato it appears from his correspondence that he had exposed himself to danger by some expression of indignation.[1] This was in 1512, when Soderini fled and left the gates of Florence open to the Cardinal Giovanni de' Medici. During the siege of Florence in 1529 he fortified Samminiato, and allowed himself to be named one of the Otto di Guerra chosen for the express purpose of defending Florence against the Medici.[2] After the fall of the city he made peace with Clement by consenting to finish the tombs of S. Lorenzo. Yet, while doing all he could to save those insignificant dukes from oblivion by the immortality of his art, Michael Angelo was conscious of his own and his country's shame. The memorable lines placed in the mouth of his 'Night,' sufficiently display his feeling after the final return of the Medici in 1530:[3]—

> Sweet is my sleep, but more to be mere stone,
> So long as ruin and dishonour reign;
> To hear nought, to feel nought, is my great gain:
> Then wake me not, speak in an under-tone.

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[1] He defends himself thus in a letter to Lodovico Buonarroti: 'Del caso dei Medici io non ò mai parlato contra di loro cosa nessuna, se non in quel modo che s' è parlato generalmente per ogn' uomo, come fu del caso di Prato; che se le pietre avessin saputo parlare, n' avrebbono parlato.'

[2] It seems clear from the correspondence in the Archivio Buonarroti, recently published, that when Michael Angelo fled from Florence to Venice in 1529, he did so under the pressure of no ignoble panic, but because his life was threatened by a traitor, acting possibly at the secret instance of Malatesta Baglioni. See Heath Wilson, pp. 326-330.

[3] See Guasti, p. 4.

When Clement VII. died, the last real representative of Michael Angelo's old patrons perished, and the sculptor was free to quit Florence for ever. During the reign of Duke Cosimo he never set foot in his native city. It is thus clear that the patriot, the artist, and the man of honour were at odds in him. Loyalty obliged him to serve the family to whom he owed so much; he was, moreover, dependent for opportunities of doing great work on the very men whose public policy he execrated. Hence arose a compromise and a confusion, hard to accommodate with our conception of his upright and unyielding temper. Only by voluntary exile, and after age had made him stubborn to resist seductive offers, could Michael Angelo act up to the promptings of his heart and declare himself a citizen who held no truce with tyrants. I have already in this work had occasion to compare Dante, Michael Angelo, and Machiavelli.[1] In estimating the conduct of the two last, it must not be forgotten that, by the action of inevitable causes, republican freedom had become in Italy a thing of the past; and in judging between Machiavelli and Michael Angelo, we have to remember that the sculptor's work involved no sacrifice of principle or self-respect. Carving statues for the tombs of Medicean dukes was a different matter from dedicating the 'Prince' to them.

This digression, though necessary for the right understanding of Michael Angelo's relation to the Medici, has carried me beyond his Florentine residence in 1501–1505. The great achievement of that period was not the 'David,' but the Cartoon for the 'Battle of Pisa.'[2] The hall of the

[1] Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 251.

[2] To these years we must also assign the two unfinished medallions of 'Madonna and the infant Christ,' the circular oil picture of the 'Holy Family,' painted for Angelo Doni, and the beautiful unfinished picture of 'Madonna with the boy Jesus and S. John' in the National Gallery. The last of these works is one of the loveliest of Michael Angelo's productions, whether we regard the symmetry of its composition

Consiglio Grande had been opened, and one wall had been assigned to Lionardo. Michael Angelo was now invited by the Signory to prepare a design for another side of the state-chamber. When he displayed his cartoon to the Florentines, they pronounced that Da Vinci, hitherto the undisputed prince of painting, was surpassed. It is impossible for us to form an opinion on this matter, since both cartoons are lost beyond recovery.[1] We only know that, as Cellini says, 'while they lasted, they formed the school of the whole world,'[2] and made an epoch in the history of art. When we inquire what was the subject of Michael Angelo's famous picture, we find that he had aimed at representing nothing of more moment than a group of soldiers suddenly surprised by a trumpet-call to battle, while bathing in the Arno—a crowd of naked men in every posture indicating haste, anxiety, and struggle. Not for its intellectual meaning, not for its colour, not for its sentiment, was this design so highly prized. Its science won

or the refinement of its types. The two groups of two boys standing behind the central group on either hand of the Virgin, have incomparable beauty of form. The supreme style of the Sistine is here revealed to us in embryo. Whether the 'Entombment,' also unfinished, and also in the National Gallery, belongs to this time, and whether it be Michael Angelo's at all, is a matter for the experts to decide. To my perception, it is quite unworthy of the painter of the Doni 'Holy Family;' nor can I think that his want of practice in oil-painting will explain its want of charm and vigour.

[1] It has long been believed that Baccio Bandinelli destroyed Michael Angelo's; but Grimm, in his Life of the sculptor (vol. i. p. 376, Eng. Tr.), adduces solid arguments against this legend. A few studies, together with the engravings of portions by Marc Antonio and Agostino Veneziano, enable us to form a notion of the composition. At Holkham there is an old copy of the larger portion of the cartoon, which has been engraved by Schiavonetti, and reproduced in Harford's *Illustrations*, plate x.

[2] *Vita*, p. 23. Cellini, the impassioned admirer of Michael Angelo, esteemed this cartoon so highly, that he writes: 'Sebbene il divino Michelagnolo fece la gran cappella di Papa Julio da poi, non arrivò mai a questo segno alla meta: la sua virtù non aggiunse mai da poi alla forza di quei primi studj.'

the admiration of artists and the public. At this period of the Renaissance the bold and perfect drawing of the body gave an exquisite delight. Hence, perhaps, Vasari's vapid talk about 'stravaganti attitudini,' 'divine figure,' 'scorticamenti,' and so forth—as if the soul of figurative art were in such matters. The science of Michael Angelo, which in his own mind was sternly subordinated to thought, had already turned the weaker heads of his generation.[1] A false ideal took possession of the fancy, and such criticism as that of Vasari and Pietro Aretino became inevitable.

Meanwhile, a new Pope had been elected, and in 1505 Michael Angelo was once more called to Rome. Thoughout his artist's life he oscillated thus between Rome and Florence —Florence the city of his ancestry, and Rome the city of his soul; Florence where he learnt his art, and Rome where he displayed what art can do of highest. Julius was a patron of different stamp from Lorenzo the Magnificent. He was not learned in book-lore: 'Place a sword in my hand!' he said to the sculptor at Bologna: 'of letters I know nothing.' Yet he was no less capable of discerning excellence than the Medici himself, and his spirit strove incessantly after the accomplishment of vast designs. Between Julius and Michael Angelo there existed a strong bond of sympathy due to community of temperament. Both aimed at colossal achievements in their respective fields of action. The imagination of both was fired by large and simple, rather than luxurious and subtle thoughts. Both were *uomini terribili*, to use a phrase denoting vigour of character made formidable by an abrupt uncompromising temper. Both worked *con furia*, with the impetuosity of dæmonic natures; and both left the impress of their individuality graven indelibly upon their age.

Julius ordered the sculptor to prepare his mausoleum Michael Angelo asked, 'Where am I to place it?' Julius

[1] The cartoon was probably exhibited in 1505. See Gotti, vol. i. p. 35.

replied, 'In S. Peter's.' But the old basilica of Christendom was too small for this ambitious pontiff's sepulchre, designed by the audacious artist. It was therefore decreed that a new S. Peter's should be built to hold it. In this way the two great labours of Buonarroti's life were mapped out for him in a moment. But, by a strange contrariety of fate, to Bramante and San Gallo fell respectively the planning and the spoiling of S. Peter's. It was only in extreme old age that Michael Angelo crowned it with that world's miracle, the dome. The mausoleum, to form a canopy for which the building was designed, dwindled down at last to the statue of 'Moses' thrust out of the way in the church of S. Pietro in Vincoli. 'La tragedia della Sepoltura,' as Condivi aptly terms the history of Giulio's monument, began thus in 1505 and dragged on till 1545.[1] Rarely did Michael Angelo undertake a work commensurate with his creative power, but something came to interrupt its execution; while tasks outside his sphere, for which he never bargained—the painting of the Sistine Chapel, the façade of S. Lorenzo, the fortification of Samminiato—were thrust upon him in the midst of other more congenial labours. What we possess of his achievement, is a *torso* of his huge designs.

Giulio's tomb, as he conceived it, would have been the most stupendous monument of sculpture in the world.[2] That mountain of marble covered with figures wrought in stone and bronze, was meant to be the sculptured poem of the thought of Death; no mere apotheosis of Pope Julius, but a pageant of the soul triumphant over the limitations of mortality. All that dignifies humanity—arts, sciences, and laws;

[1] Gotti, pp. 277–282.

[2] Springer, in his essay, *Michael Agnolo in Rome*, p. 21, makes out that this large design was not conceived till after the death of Julius. It is difficult to form a clear notion of the many changes in the plan of the tomb, between 1505 and 1542, when Michael Angelo signed the last contract with the heirs of Julius.

the victory that crowns heroic effort; the majesty of contemplation, and the energy of action—was symbolised upon ascending tiers of the great pyramid; while the genii of heaven and earth upheld the open tomb, where lay the dead man waiting for the Resurrection. Of this gigantic scheme only one imperfect drawing now remains.[1] The 'Moses' and the 'Bound Captives'[2] are all that Michael Angelo accomplished. For forty years the 'Moses' remained in his workshop. For forty years he cherished a hope that his plan might still in part be executed, complaining the while that it would have been better for him to have made sulphur matches all his life than to have taken up the desolating artist's trade. 'Every day,' he cries, 'I am stoned as though I had crucified Christ. My youth has been lost, bound hand and foot to this tomb.'[3] It was decreed apparently that Michael Angelo should exist for after ages as a fragment; and such might Pheidias among the Greeks have been, if he had worked for ephemeral Popes and bankrupt princes instead of Pericles. Italy in the sixteenth century, dislocated, distracted, and drained of her material resources, gave no opportunity to artists for the creation of monuments colossal in their unity.

Michael Angelo spent eight months at this period among the stone quarries of Carrara, selecting marble for the Pope's tomb.[4] There his brain, always teeming with gigantic conceptions, suggested to him a new fancy. Could not the headland jutting out beyond Sarzana into the Tyrrhene Sea

[1] In the Uffizzi at Florence. See Heath Wilson, plate vi.

[2] Boboli Gardens, Bargello, Louvre. These captives are unfinished. The 'Rachel' and 'Leah' at S. Pietro in Vincoli were committed to pupils by Michael Angelo.

[3] 'Che mi fosse messo a fare zolfanelli. . . . Son ogni dì lapidato, come se havessi crucifisso Cristo. . . . io mi truovo avere perduta tutta la mia giovinezza legato a questa sepoltura.'

[4] Gotti, p. 42. Grimm makes two visits to Carrara in 1505 and 1506, vol. i. pp. 239, 243.

be carved by his workmen into a Pharos? To transmute a mountain into a statue, holding a city in either hand, had been the dream of a Greek artist. Michael Angelo revived the bold thought; but to execute it would have been almost beyond his power. Meanwhile, in November 1505, the marble was shipped, and the quays of Rome were soon crowded with blocks destined for the mausoleum. But when the sculptor arrived, he found that enemies had been poisoning the Pope's mind against him, and that Julius had abandoned the scheme of the mausoleum. On six successive days he was denied entrance to the Vatican, and the last time with such rudeness that he determined to quit Rome.[1] He hurried straightway to his house, sold his effects, mounted, and rode without further ceremony toward Florence, sending to the Pope a written message bidding him to seek for Michael Angelo elsewhere in future than in Rome. It is related that Julius, anxious to recover what had been so lightly lost, sent several couriers to bring him back.[2] Michael Angelo announced that he intended to accept the Sultan's commission for building a bridge at Pera, and refused to be persuaded to return to Rome. This was at Poggibonsi. When he had reached Florence, Julius addressed himself to Soderini, who, unwilling to displease the Pope, induced Michael Angelo to seek the pardon of the master he had so abruptly quitted. By that time Julius had left the city for the camp; and when Michael Angelo finally appeared before him, fortified with letters from the Signory of Florence, it was at Bologna that

[1] See his letter. Gotti, p. 44.

[2] Our authorities for this episode in Michael Angelo's biography are mainly Vasari and Condivi. Though there may be exaggeration in the legend, it is certain that a correspondence took place between the Pope and the Gonfalonier of Florence, to bring about his return. See Heath Wilson, pp. 79–87, and the letter to Giuliano di San Gallo in Milanesi's *Archivio Buonarroti*, p. 377. Michael Angelo appears to have had some reason to fear assassination in Rome.

they met. 'You have waited thus long, it seems,' said the Pope, well satisfied but surly, 'till we should come ourselves to seek you.' The prelate who had introduced the sculptor now began to make excuses for him, whereupon Julius turned in a fury upon the officious courtier, and had him beaten from his presence. A few days after this encounter Michael Angelo was ordered to cast a bronze statue of Julius for the frontispiece of S. Petronio. The sculptor objected that brass-foundry was not his affair. 'Never mind,' said Julius; 'get to work, and we will cast your statue till it comes out perfect.'[1] Michael Angelo did as he was bid, and the statue was set up in 1508 above the great door of the church. The Pope was seated, with his right hand raised; in the other were the keys. When Julius asked him whether he was meant to bless or curse the Bolognese with that uplifted hand, Buonarroti found an answer worthy of a courtier: 'Your Holiness is threatening this people, if it be not wise.' Less than four years afterwards Julius lost his hold upon Bologna, the party of the Bentivogli returned to power, and the statue was destroyed. A bronze cannon, called the 'Giulia,' was made out of Michael Angelo's masterpiece by the best gunsmith of his century, Alfonso Duke of Ferrara.

It seems that Michael Angelo's flight from Rome in 1506 was due not only to his disappointment about the tomb, but also to his fear lest Julius should give him uncongenial work to do. Bramante, if we may believe the old story, had whispered that it was ill-omened for a man to build his own sepulchre, and that it would be well to employ the sculptor's genius upon the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. Accordingly, on his return to Rome in 1508, this new task was allotted him. In vain did Michael Angelo remind his master of the months wasted in the quarries of Carrara; in vain he pointed to his

[1] See Michael Angelo's letters to Giovan Francesco Fattucci, and his family. Gotti, pp. 55–65.

designs for the monument, and pleaded that he was not a painter by profession.[1] Julius had made up his mind that he should paint the Sistine. Was not the cartoon at Florence a sufficient proof that he could do this if he chose, and had he not learned the art of fresco in the *bottega* of his master Ghirlandajo? Whatever his original reluctance may have been, it was speedily overcome; and the cartoons for the ceiling, projected with the unity belonging to a single great conception, were ready by the summer of 1508.[2]

The difficulty of his new task aroused the artist's energy. If we could accept the legend, whereby contemporaries expressed their admiration for this Titanic labour, we should have to believe the impossible—that Michael Angelo ground his own colours, prepared his own plaster, and completed with his own hand the whole work, after having first conquered the obstacles of scaffolding and vault-painting by machines of his own invention,[3] and that only twenty months

[1] See the sonnet to Giovanni da Pistoja:—

La mia pittura morta
Difendi orma', Giovanni, e 'l mio onore,
Non sendo in loco bon, nè io pittore.

[2] According to the first plan, Michael Angelo bargained with the Pope for twelve Apostles in the lunettes, and another part to be filled with ornament in the usual manner—'dodici Apostoli nelle lunette, e 'l resto un certo partimento ripieno d' adornamenti come si usa.' Michael Angelo, after making designs for this commission, told the Pope he thought the roof would look poor, because the Apostles were poor folk—'perchè furon poveri anche loro.' He then began his cartoons for the vault as it now exists. See the letter to Ser Giovan Francesco Fattucci, in the *Archivio Buonarroti*, Milanesi, pp. 426–427. This seems to be the foundation for an old story of the Pope's complaining that the Sistine roof looked poor without gilding, and Michael Angelo's reply that the Biblical personages depicted there were but poor people.

[3] Bramante, the Pope's architect, did in truth fail to construct the proper scaffolding, whether through inability or jealousy. Michael Angelo designed a superior system of his own, which became a model for future architects in similar constructions.

were devoted to the execution of a series of paintings almost unequalled in their delicacy, and surpassed by few single masterpieces in extent. What may be called the mythus of the Sistine Chapel has at last been finally disproved, partly by the personal observations of Mr. Heath Wilson, and partly by the publication of Michael Angelo's correspondence.[1] Though some uncertainty remains as to the exact dates of the commencement and completion of the vault, we now know that Michael Angelo continued painting it at intervals during four successive years; and though we are not accurately informed about his helpers, we no longer can doubt that able craftsmen yielded him assistance. On May 10, 1508, he signed a receipt for five hundred ducats advanced by Julius for the necessary expenses of the undertaking; and on the next day he paid ten ducats to a mason for rough plastering and surface-finishing applied to the vault. There is good reason to believe that he began his painting during the autumn of 1508. On November 1, 1509, a certain portion was uncovered to the public; and before the end of the year 1512 the whole was completed. Thus, though the legend of Vasari and Condivi has been stripped of the miraculous by careful observation and keen-sighted criticism, enough remains to justify the sense of wonder that expressed itself in their exaggerated statements. No one but Michael Angelo could have done what he did in the Sistine Chapel. The conception was entirely his own. The execution, except in subordinate details and in matters pertaining to the mason's craft, was also his. The rapidity with which he laboured was astounding. Mr. Heath Wilson infers from the condition of the plaster and the joinings observable in different parts, that the figure of Adam,

[1] See chapters vi. vii. and viii. of Mr. Charles Heath Wilson's admirable *Life of Michel Angelo*. Aurelio Gotti's *Vita di Michel Agnolo*, and Anton Springer's *Michael Agnolo in Rome*, deserve to be consulted on this passage in the painter's biography.

highly finished as it is, was painted in three days. Nor need we strip the romance from that time-honoured tale of the great master's solitude. Lying on his back beneath the dreary vault, communing with Dante, Savonarola, and the Hebrew prophets in the intervals of labour, locking up the chapel-doors in order to elude the jealous curiosity of rivals, eating but little and scarcely sleeping, he accomplished in sixteen months the first part of his gigantic task.[1] From time to time Julius climbed the scaffold and inspected the painter's progress. Dreading lest death should come before the work were finished, he kept crying, 'When will you make an end?' 'When I can,' answered the painter. 'You seem to want,' rejoined the petulant old man, 'that I should have you thrown down from the scaffold.' Then Michael Angelo's brush stopped. The machinery was removed, and the frescoes were uncovered in their incompleteness to the eyes of Rome.

Entering the Cappella Sistina, and raising our eyes to sweep the roof, we have above us a long and somewhat narrow oblong space, vaulted with round arches, and covered from end to end, from side to side, with a network of human forms. The whole is coloured like the dusky, tawny, blueish clouds of thunderstorms. There is no luxury of decorative art;—no gold, no paint-box of vermilion or emerald green, has been lavished here. Sombre and aërial, like shapes condensed from vapour, or dreams begotten by Ixion upon mists of eve or dawn, the phantoms evoked by the sculptor throng that space. Nine compositions, carrying down the sacred history from the creation of light to the beginning of sin in Noah's household, fill the central compartments of the roof. Beneath

[1] The conditions under which Michael Angelo worked, without a trained band of pupils, must have struck contemporaries, accustomed to Raphael's crowds of assistants, with a wonder that justified Vasari's emphatic language of exaggeration as to his single-handed labour.

these, seated on the spandrils, are alternate prophets and sibyls, twelve in all, attesting to the future deliverance and judgment of the world by Christ. The intermediate spaces between these larger masses, on the roof and in the lunettes of the windows, swarm with figures, some naked and some draped—women and children, boys and young men, grouped in tranquil attitudes, or adapting themselves with freedom to their station on the curves and angles of the architecture. In these subordinate creations Michael Angelo deigned to drop the terrible style, in order that he might show how sweet and full of charm his art could be. The grace of colouring, realised in some of those youthful and athletic forms, is such as no copy can represent. Every posture of beauty and of strength, simple or strained, that it is possible for men to assume, has been depicted here. Yet the whole is governed by a strict sense of sobriety. The restlessness of Correggio, the violent attitudinising of Tintoretto, belong alike to another and less noble spirit.

To speak adequately of these form-poems would be quite impossible. Buonarroti seems to have intended to prove by them that the human body has a language, inexhaustible in symbolism—every limb, every feature, and every attitude being a word full of significance to those who comprehend, just as music is a language whereof each note and chord and phrase has correspondence with the spiritual world. It may be presumptuous after this fashion to interpret the design of him who called into existence the heroic population of the Sistine. Yet Michael Angelo has written lines which in some measure justify the reading. This is how he closes one of his finest sonnets to Vittoria Colonna :

> Nor hath God deigned to show Himself elsewhere
> More clearly than in human forms sublime ;
> Which, since they image Him, compel my love.

Therefore to him a well-shaped hand, or throat, or head, a

neck superbly poised on an athletic chest, the sway of the trunk above the hips, the starting of the muscles on the flank, the tendons of the ankle, the outline of the shoulder when the arm is raised, the backward bending of the loins, the curves of a woman's breast, the contours of a body careless in repose or strained for action, were all words pregnant with profoundest meaning, whereby fit utterance might be given to the thoughts that raise man near to God. But, it may be asked, what poems of action as well as feeling are to be expressed in this form-language? The answer is simple. Paint or carve the body of a man, and, as you do it nobly, you will give the measure of both highest thought and most impassioned deed. This is the key to Michael Angelo's art. He cared but little for inanimate nature. The landscapes of Italy, so eloquent in their sublimity and beauty, were apparently a blank to him. His world was the world of ideas, taking visible form, incarnating themselves in man. One language the master had to serve him in all need—the language of plastic human form; but it was to him a tongue as rich in its variety of accent and of intonation as Beethoven's harmonies.

In the Sistine Chapel, where plastic art is so supreme, we are bound to ask the further question, What was the difference between Michael Angelo and a Greek? The Parthenon with its processions of youths and maidens, its gods and heroes, rejoicing in their strength, and robed with raiment that revealed their living form, made up a symphony of meaning as full as this of Michael Angelo, and far more radiant. The Greek sculptor embraced humanity in his work no less comprehensively than the Italian; and what he had to say was said more plainly in the speech they both could use. But between Pheidias and Michael Angelo lay Christianity, the travail of the world through twenty centuries. Clear as morning, and calm in the unconsciousness of beauty, are those

heroes of the youth of Hellas. All is grace, repose, strength shown but not asserted. Michael Angelo's Sibyls and Prophets are old and wrinkled, bowed with thought, consumed by vigils, startled from tranquillity by visions, overburdened with the messages of God. The loveliest among them, the Delphic, lifts dilated eyes, as though to follow dreams that fly upon the paths of trance. Even the young men strain their splendid limbs, and seem to shout or shriek, as if the life in them contained some element of pain. 'He maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire:' this verse rises to our lips when we seek to describe the genii that crowd the cornice of the Sistine Chapel. The human form in the work of Pheidias wore a joyous and sedate serenity; in that of Michael Angelo it is turbid with a strange and awful sense of inbreathed agitation. Through the figure-language of the one was spoken the pagan creed, bright, unperturbed, and superficial. The sculpture of the Parthenon accomplished the transfiguration of the natural man. In the other man awakes to a new life of contest, disillusionment, hope, dread, and heavenward striving. It was impossible for the Greek and the Italian, bearing so different a burden of prophecy, even though they used the same speech, to tell the same tale; and this should be remembered by those critics who cast exaggeration and contortion in the teeth of Michael Angelo. Between the birth of the free spirit in Greece and its second birth in Italy, there yawned a sepulchre wherein the old faiths of the world lay buried and whence Christ had risen.[1]

[1] In speaking of the Sistine I have treated Michael Angelo as a sculptor, and it was a sculptor who designed those frescoes. *Nè io pittore* is his own phrase. Compare an autotype of 'Adam' in the Sistine with one of 'Twilight' in S. Lorenzo: it is clear that in the former Michael Angelo painted what he would have been well pleased to carve. A sculptor's genius was needed for the modelling of those many figures; it was, moreover, not a painter's part to deal thus drily with colour.

The star of Raphael, meanwhile, had arisen over Rome. Between the two greatest painters of their age the difference was striking. Michael Angelo stood alone, his own master, fashioned in his own school. A band of artists called themselves by Raphael's name; and in his style we trace the influence of several predecessors. Michael Angelo rarely received visits, frequented no society, formed no pupils, and boasted of no friends at Court. Raphael was followed to the Vatican by crowds of students; his levées were like those of a prince; he counted among his intimates the best scholars and poets of the age; his hand was pledged in marriage to a cardinal's niece. It does not appear that they engaged in petty rivalries, or that they came much into personal contact with each other. While Michael Angelo was so framed that he could learn from no man, Raphael gladly learned of Michael Angelo; and after the uncovering of the Sistine frescoes, his manner showed evident signs of alteration. Julius, who had given Michael Angelo the Sistine, set Raphael to work upon the Stanze. For Julius were painted the 'Miracle of Bolsena' and the 'Expulsion of Heliodorus from the Temple,' scenes containing courtly compliments for the old Pope. No such compliments had been paid by Michael Angelo. Like his great parallel in music, Beethoven, he displayed an almost arrogant contempt for the conventionalities whereby an artist wins the favour of his patrons and the world.

After the death of Julius, Leo X., in character the reverse of his fiery predecessor, and by temperament unsympathetic to the austere Michael Angelo, found nothing better for the sculptor's genius than to set him at work upon the façade of S. Lorenzo at Florence. The better part of the years between 1516 and 1520 was spent in quarrying marble at Carrara, Pietra Santa, and Seravezza. This is the most arid and unfruitful period of Michael Angelo's long life, a period of delays and thwarted schemes and servile labours. What makes the sense of disappointment greater, is that the façade

of S. Lorenzo was not even finished.[1] We hurry over this wilderness of wasted months, and arrive at another epoch of artistic production.

Already in 1520 the Cardinal Giulio de' Medici had conceived the notion of building a sacristy in S. Lorenzo to receive the monuments of Cosimo, the founder of the house, Lorenzo the Magnificent, Giuliano Duke of Nemours, Lorenzo Duke of Urbino, Leo X., and himself.[2] To Michael Angelo was committed the design, and in 1521 he began to apply himself to the work. Nine years had now elapsed since the roof of the Sistine chapel had been finished, and during this time Michael Angelo had produced little except the 'Christ' of S. Maria sopra Minerva. This new undertaking occupied him at intervals between 1521 and 1534, a space of time decisive for the fortunes of the Medici in Florence. Leo died, and Giulio after a few years succeeded him as Clement VII. The bastards of the house, Ippolito and Alessandro, were expelled from Florence in 1527. Rome was sacked by the Imperial troops; then Michael Angelo quitted the statues and helped to defend his native city against the Prince of Orange. After the failure of the Republicans, he was recalled to his labours by command of Clement. Sullenly and sadly he quarried marbles for the sacristy. Sadly and sullenly he used his chisel year by year, making the very stones cry that shame and ruin were the doom of his country. At last in 1534 Clement died. Then Michael Angelo flung down his mallet. The monuments remained unfinished, and the sculptor set foot in Florence no more.[3]

[1] The Laurentian Library, however, was built in 1524.

[2] See Gotti, pp. 150, 155, 158, 159, for the correspondence which passed upon the subject, and the various alterations in the plan. As in the case of all Michael Angelo's works, except the Sistine, only a small portion of the original project was executed.

[3] Cosimo de' Medici found it impossible to induce him to return to Florence. See B. Cellini's Life, p. 436, for his way of receiving the Duke's overtures.

The Sacristy of S. Lorenzo was built by Michael Angelo and panelled with marbles to receive the sculpture he meant to place there.[1] Thus the colossal statues of Giuliano and Lorenzo were studied with a view to their light and shadow as much as to their form; and this is a fact to be remembered by those who visit the chapel where Buonarroti laboured both as architect and sculptor. Of the two Medici, it is not fanciful to say that the 'Duke of Urbino' is the most immovable of spectral shapes eternalised in marble; while the 'Duke of Nemours,' more graceful and elegant, seems intended to present a contrast to this terrible thought-burdened form.[2] The allegorical figures, stretched on segments of ellipses beneath the pedestals of the two dukes, indicate phases of darkness and of light, of death and life. They are two women and two men; tradition names them 'Night' and 'Day,' 'Twilight' and 'Dawning.' Thus in the statues themselves and in their attendant genii we have a series of abstractions, symbolising the sleep and waking of existence, action and thought, the gloom of death, the lustre of life, and the intermediate states of sadness and of hope that form the borderland of both. Life is a dream between two slumbers; sleep is death's twin-brother; night is the shadow of death; death is the gate of life:—such is the mysterious mythology wrought by the sculptor of the modern world in marble. All these figures, by the intensity

[1] See above, p. 62.

[2] Vasari names the gloomy statue, called by the Italians *Il Penseroso*, 'Lorenzo, Duke of Urbino,' the sprightly one, 'Giuliano, Duke of Nemours;' and this contemporary tradition has been recently confirmed by an inspection of the Penseroso's tomb (see a letter to the *Academy*, March 13, 1875, by Mr. Charles Heath Wilson). Grimm, in his *Life of Michael Angelo*, gave plausible æsthetic reasons why we should reverse the nomenclature; but the discovery of two bodies beneath the Penseroso, almost certainly those of Lorenzo and his supposed son Alessandro, justifies Vasari. Neither of these statues can be accepted as a portrait.

of their expression, the vagueness of their symbolism, force us to think and question. What, for example, occupies Lorenzo's brain? Bending forward, leaning his chin upon his wrist, placing the other hand upon his knee, on what does he for ever ponder? The sight, as Rogers said well, 'fascinates and is intolerable.' Michael Angelo has shot the beaver of the helmet forward on his forehead, and bowed his head, so as to clothe the face in darkness. But behind the gloom there is no skull, as Rogers fancied. The whole frame of the powerful man is instinct with some imperious thought. Has he outlived his life and fallen upon everlasting contemplation? Is he brooding, injured and indignant, over his own doom and the extinction of his race? Is he condemned to witness in immortal immobility the woes of Italy he helped to cause? Or has the sculptor symbolised in him the burden of that personality we carry with us in this life and bear for ever when we wake into another world? Beneath this incarnation of oppressive thought there lie, full-length and naked, the figures of Dawn and Twilight, Morn and Evening. So at least they are commonly called: and these names are not inappropriate; for the breaking of the day and the approach of night are metaphors for many transient conditions of the soul. It is only as allegories in a large sense, comprehending both the physical and intellectual order, and capable of various interpretation, that any of these statues can be understood. Even the Dukes do not pretend to be portraits: and hence in part perhaps the uncertainty that has gathered round them. Very tranquil and noble is Twilight: a giant in repose, he meditates, leaning upon his elbow, looking down. But Dawn starts from her couch, as though some painful summons had reached her sunk in dreamless sleep, and called her forth to suffer. Her waking to consciousness is like that of one who has been drowned, and who finds the

return to life agony. Before her eyes, seen even through the mists of slumber, are the ruin and the shame of Italy. Opposite lies Night, so sorrowful, so utterly absorbed in darkness and the shade of death, that to shake off that everlasting lethargy seems impossible. Yet she is not dead. If we raise our voices, she too will stretch her limbs and, like her sister, shudder into sensibility with sighs. Only we must not wake her; for he who fashioned her, has told us that her sleep of stone is great good fortune. Both of these women are large and brawny, unlike the Fates of Pheidias in their muscular maturity. The burden of Michael Angelo's thought was too tremendous to be borne by virginal or graceful beings. He had to make women no less capable of suffering, no less world-wearied, than his country.

Standing before these statues, we do not cry, How beautiful! We murmur, How terrible, how grand! Yet, after long gazing, we find them gifted with beauty beyond grace. In each of them there is a palpitating thought, torn from the artist's soul and crystallised in marble. It has been said that architecture is petrified music. In the sacristy of S. Lorenzo we feel impelled to remember phrases of Beethoven. Each of these statues becomes for us a passion, fit for musical expression, but turned like Niobe to stone. They have the intellectual vagueness, the emotional certainty, that belong to the motives of a symphony. In their allegories, left without a key, sculpture has passed beyond her old domain of placid concrete form. The anguish of intolerable emotion, the quickening of the consciousness to a sense of suffering, the acceptance of the inevitable, the strife of the soul with destiny, the burden and the passion of mankind:—that is what they contain in their cold chisel-tortured marble. It is open to critics of the school of Lessing to object that here is the suicide of sculpture. It is easy to remark that those strained postures and writhen limbs may have perverted the

taste of lesser craftsmen. Yet if Michael Angelo was called to carve Medicean statues after the sack of Rome and the fall of Florence—if he was obliged in sober sadness to make sculpture a fit language for his sorrow-laden heart—how could he have wrought more truthfully than thus? To imitate him without sharing his emotions or comprehending his thoughts, as the soulless artist of the decadence attempted, was without any doubt a grievous error. Surely also we may regret, not without reason, that in the evil days upon which he had fallen, the fair antique 'Heiterkeit' and 'Allgemeinheit' were beyond his reach.

Michael Angelo left the tombs of the Medici unfinished; nor, in spite of Duke Cosimo's earnest entreaties, would he afterwards return to Florence to complete them. Lorenzo's features are but rough-hewn; so is the face of Night. Day seems struggling into shape beneath his mask of rock, and Twilight shows everywhere the tooth-dint of the chisel. To leave unfinished was the fate of Michael Angelo—partly too, perhaps, his preference; for he was easily deterred from work. Many of his marbles are only just begun. The two medallion 'Madonnas,' the 'Madonna and Child' in S. Lorenzo, the 'Head of Brutus,' the 'Bound Captives,' and the 'Pietà' in the Duomo of Florence, are instances of masterpieces in the rough. He loved to fancy that the form dwelt within the stone, and that the chisel disencumbered it of superfluity. Therefore, to his eye, foreseeing what the shape would be when the rude envelope was chipped away, the marble mask may have taken the appearance of a veil or mantle. He may have found some fascination in the incompleteness that argued want of will but not of art, and a rough-hewn Madonna may have been to him what a Dryad still enclosed within a gnarled oak was to a Greek poet's fancy. We are not, however, justified in therefore assuming, as a recent critic has suggested, that Michael Angelo sought

to realise a certain preconceived effect by want of finish. There is enough in the distracted circumstances of his life and in his temper, at once passionate and downcast, to account for fragmentary and imperfect performance; nor must it be forgotten that the manual labour of the sculptor in the sixteenth century was by no means so light as it is now. A decisive argument against this theory is that Buonarroti's three most celebrated statues—the 'Pietà' in S. Peter's, the 'Moses' and the 'Dawn'—are executed with the highest polish it is possible for stone to take.[1] That he always aimed at this high finish, but often fell below it through discontent and *ennui* and the importunity of patrons, we have the best reason to believe.

Michael Angelo had now reached his fifty-ninth year. Lionardo and Raphael had already passed away, and were remembered as the giants of a bygone age of gold. Correggio was in his last year. Andrea del Sarto was dead. Nowhere except at Venice did Italian art still flourish; and the mundane style of Titian was not to the sculptor's taste. He had outlived the greatness of his country, and saw Italy in ruins. Yet he was destined to survive another thirty years, another lifetime of Masaccio or Raphael, and to witness still worse days. When we call Michael Angelo the interpreter of the burden and the pain of the Renaissance, we must remember this long weary old age, during which in solitude and silence he watched the extinction of Florence, the institution of the

[1] The 'Bacchus' of the Bargello, the 'David,' the 'Christ,' of the Minerva, the 'Duke of Nemours,' and the almost finished 'Night,' might also be mentioned. His chalk drawings of the 'Bersaglieri,' the 'Infant Bacchanals,' the 'Fall of Phaëthon,' and the 'Punishment of Tityos,' now in the Royal Collection at Windsor, prove that even in old age Michael Angelo carried delicacy of execution as a draughtsman to a point not surpassed even by Lionardo. Few frescoes, again, were ever finished with more conscientious elaboration than those of the Sistine vault.

Inquisition, and the abasement of the Italian spirit beneath the tyranny of Spain. His sonnets, written chiefly in this latter period of life, turn often on the thought of death. His love of art yields to religious hope and fear, and he bemoans a youth and manhood spent in vanity. Once when he injured his leg by a fall from the scaffolding in the Sistine Chapel, he refused assistance, shut himself up at home, and lay waiting for deliverance in death. His life was only saved by the forcible interference of friends.

In 1534 a new Eurystheus arose for our Hercules. The Cardinal Alessandro Farnese, a fox by nature and infamous through his indulgence for a vicious bastard, was made Pope under the name of Paul III.[1] Michael Angelo had shed lustre on the reigns of three Popes, his predecessors. For thirty years the Farnese had watched him with greedy eyes. After Julius, Leo, and Clement, the time was now come for the heroic craftsman to serve Paul. The Pope found him at work in his *bottega* on the tomb of Julius; for the 'tragedy of the mausoleum' still dragged on. The statue of Moses was finished. 'That,' said Paul, 'is enough for one Pope. Give me your contract with the Duke of Urbino; I will tear it. Have I waited all these years; and now that I am Pope at last, shall I not have you for myself? I want you in the Sistine Chapel.' Accordingly Michael Angelo, who had already made cartoons for the 'Last Judgment' in the life of Clement, once more laid aside the chisel and took up the brush. For eight years, between 1534 and 1542, he laboured at the fresco above the high altar of the chapel, devoting his terrible genius to a subject worthy of the times in which he lived. Since he had first listened while a youth to the prophecies of Savonarola, the woes announced in that apocalypse had all

[1] See Varchi, at the end of the *Storia Fiorentina*, for episodes in the life of Pier Luigi Farnese, and Cellini for a popular estimate of the Cardinal, his father.

come true. Italy had been scourged, Rome sacked, the Church chastised. And yet the world had not grown wiser; vice was on the increase, virtue grew more rare.[1] It was impossible after the experience of the immediate past and within view of the present and the future, to conceive of God as other than an angry judge, vindictive and implacable.

The 'Last Judgment' has long been the most celebrated of Michael Angelo's paintings; partly no doubt because it was executed in the plenitude of his fame, with the eyes of all Italy upon him; partly because its size arouses vulgar wonder, and its theme strikes terror into all who gaze on it. Yet it is neither so strong nor so beautiful as the vault-paintings of the Sistine. The freshness of the genius that created Eve and Adam, unrivalled in their bloom of primal youth, has passed away. Austerity and gloom have taken possession of the painter. His style has hardened into mannerism, and the display of barren science in difficult posturing and strained anatomy has become wilful. Still, whether we regard this fresco as closing the long series of 'Last Judgments' to be studied on Italian church-walls from Giotto downwards; or whether we confine our attention, as contemporaries seem to have done, to the skill of its foreshortenings and groupings;[2] or whether we analyse the dramatic

[1] This extract from Cesare Balbo's *Pensieri sulla Storia d' Italia*, Le Monnier, 1858, p. 57, may help to explain the situation: 'E se lasciando gli uomini e i nomi grandi de' governanti, noi venissimo a quella storia, troppo sovente negletta, dei piccoli, dei più, dei governati che sono in somma scopo d' ogni sorta di governo; se, coll' aiuto delle tante memorie rimaste di quell' secolo, noi ci addestrassimo a conoscere la condizione comune e privata degli Italiani di quell' età, noi troveremmo trasmesse dai governanti a' governati, e ritornate da questi a quelli, tali universali scostumatezze ed immoralità, tali fiacchezze e perfidie, tali mollezze e libidini, tali ozi e tali vizi, tali avvilimenti insomma e corruzioni, che sembrano appena credibili in una età d' incivilmento cristiano.'

[2] Vasari's description moves our laughter with its jargon about 'attitudini bellissime e scorti molto mirabili,' when the man, in spite of

energy wherewith tremendous passions are expressed, its triumph is in either case decided. The whole wall swarms with ascending and descending, poised and hovering, shapes —men and women rising from the grave before the judge, taking their stations among the saved, or sinking with unutterable anguish to the place of doom—a multitude that no man can number, surging to and fro in dim tempestuous air. In the centre at the top, Christ is rising from His throne with the gesture of an angry Hercules, hurling ruin on the guilty. He is such as the sins of Italy have made Him. Squadrons of angels, bearing the emblems of His passion, whirl around Him like grey thunder-clouds, and all the saints lean forward from their vantage ground to curse and threaten. At the very bottom bestial features take the place of human lineaments, and the terror of judgment has become the torment of damnation. Such is the general scope of this picture. Of all its merits, none is greater than the delineation of uncertainty and gradual awakening to life. The middle region between vigilance and slumber, reality and dream, Michael Angelo ruled as his own realm; and a painting of the 'Last Judgment' enabled him to deal with this μεταίχμιος σκότος—this darkness in the interval of crossing spears—under its most solemn aspect.

When the fresco was uncovered, there arose a general murmur of disapprobation that the figures were all nude. As society became more vicious, it grew nice. Messer Biagio, the Pope's master of the ceremonies, remarked that such things were more fit for stews and taverns than a chapel. The angry painter placed his portrait in Hell with a mark of

his honest and enthusiastic admiration, is so little capable of penetrating the painter's thought. Mr. Ruskin leaves the same impression as Vasari: he too makes much talk about attitudes and muscles in Michael Angelo, and seems to be on Vasari's level as to comprehending him. The difference is that Vasari praises, Ruskin blames: both miss the mark.

infamy that cast too lurid a light upon this prudish speech. When Biagio complained, Paul wittily answered that, had it been Purgatory, he might have helped him, but in Hell is no redemption. Even the foul-mouthed and foul-hearted Aretino wrote from Venice to the same effect—a letter astounding for its impudence.[1] Michael Angelo made no defence. Perhaps he reflected that the souls of the Pope himself and Messer Biagio and Messer Pietro Aretino would go forth one day naked to appear before the judge, with the deformities of sin upon them, as in Plato's 'Gorgias.' He refused, however, to give clothes to his men and women. Daniel da Volterra, who was afterwards employed to do this, got the name of breeches-maker.

We are hardly able to appreciate the 'Last Judgment;' it has been so smirched and blackened by the smoke and dust of centuries. And this is true of the whole Sistine Chapel.[2] Yet it is here that the genius of Michael Angelo in all its terribleness must still be studied. In order to characterise the impression produced by even the less awful of these frescoes on a sympathetic student, I lay my pen aside and beg the reader to weigh what Henri Beyle, the versatile and brilliant critic, pencilled in the gallery of the Sistine Chapel on January 18, 1807:[3] 'Greek sculpture was unwilling to

[1] 'È possibile che voi, che *per essere divino non degnate il consortio degli huomini*, haviate ciò fatto nel maggior tempio di Dio? . . . . . In un bagno delitioso, non in un choro supremo si conveniva il far vostro.' Those who are curious may consult Aretino's correspondence with Michael Angelo in his published letters (Parigi, 1609), lib. i. p. 153; lib. ii. p. 9; lib. iii. pp. 45, 122; lib. iv. p. 37.

[2] Braun's autotypes of the vault frescoes show what ravage the lapse of time has wrought in them, by the cracking of the plaster, the peeling off in places of the upper surface, and the deposit of dirt and cobwebs. Mr. Heath Wilson, after careful examination, pronounces that not only time, but the wilful hand of man, re-painting and washing the delicate tint-coats with corrosive acids, has contributed to their ruin.

[3] *Histoire de la Peinture en Italie*, p. 332.

reproduce the terrible in any shape; the Greeks had enough real troubles of their own. Therefore, in the realm of art, nothing can be compared with the figure of the Eternal drawing forth the first man from nonentity. The pose, the drawing, the drapery, all is striking: the soul is agitated by sensations that are not usually communicated through the eyes. When in our disastrous retreat from Russia, it chanced that we were suddenly awakened in the middle of the dark night by an obstinate cannonading, which at each moment seemed to gain in nearness, then all the forces of a man's nature gathered close around his heart; he felt himself in the presence of fate, and, having no attention left for things of vulgar interest, he made himself ready to dispute his life with destiny. The sight of Michael Angelo's pictures has brought back to my consciousness that almost forgotten sensation. Great souls enjoy their own greatness: the rest of the world is seized with fear, and goes mad.'

After the painting of the 'Last Judgment,' one more great labour was reserved for Michael Angelo.[1] By a brief of September, 1535, Paul III. had made him the chief architect as well as sculptor and painter of the Holy See. He was now called upon to superintend the building of S. Peter's, and to this task, undertaken for the repose of his soul without emolument, he devoted the last years of his life. The dome of S. Peter's, as seen from Tivoli or the Alban hills, like a cloud upon the Campagna, is Buonarroti's; but he has no share in the façade that screens it from the piazza. It lies beyond the scope of this chapter to relate once more the history of the vicissitudes through which S. Peter's went between the days of Alberti and Bernini.[2] I can but refer to

[1] That is not counting the frescoes of the Cappella Paolina in the Vatican, painted about 1544, which are now in a far worse state even than the 'Last Judgment,' and which can never have done more than show his style in decadence.

[2] See above, pp. 65–67.

Michael Angelo's letter addressed to Bartolommeo Ammanati, valuable both as setting forth his views about the structure, and as rendering the fullest and most glorious meed of praise to his old enemy Bramante.[1] All ancient jealousies, even had they ever stirred the heart of Michael Angelo, had long been set at rest by time and death. The one wish of his soul was to set a worthy diadem upon the mother-church of Christianity, repairing by the majesty of art what Rome had suffered at the hands of Germany and Spain, and inaugurating by this visible sign of sovereignty the new age of Catholicity renascent and triumphant.

To the last period of Buonarroti's life (a space of twenty-two years between 1542 and 1564) we owe some of his most beautiful drawings—sketches for pictures of the Crucifixion made for Vittoria Colonna, and a few mythological designs, like the 'Rape of Ganymede,' composed for Tommaso Cavalieri. His thoughts meanwhile were turned more and more, as time advanced, to piety; and many of his sonnets breathe an almost ascetic spirit of religion.[2] We see in them the old man regretting the years he had spent on art, deploring his enthusiasm for earthly beauty, and seeking comfort in the cross alone.

> Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest
> My soul, that turns to His great love on high,
> Whose arms to clasp us on the cross were spread.

It is pleasant to know that these last years were also the happiest and calmest. Though he had lost his faithful friend and servant Urbino; though his father had died, an old man, and his brothers had passed away before him one by one, his nephew Lionardo had married in Florence, and

[1] See Gotti, p. 307, or *Archivio Buonarroti*, p. 535.

[2] I have reserved my translation of the sonnets that cast most light upon Michael Angelo's thought and feeling for an Appendix, No. II.

begotten a son called Michael Angelo. Thus he had the satisfaction of hoping that his name would endure and flourish, as indeed it has done almost to this very day in Florence. What consolation this thought must have brought him, is clear to those who have studied his correspondence and observed the tender care and continual anxiety he had for his kinsmen.[1] Wealth now belonged to him: but he had never cared for money; and he continued to live like a poor man, dressing soberly and eating sparely, often taking but one meal in the day, and that of bread and wine.[2] He slept little, and rose by night to work upon his statues, wearing a cap with a candle stuck in front of it, that he might see where to drive the chisel home. During his whole life he had been solitary, partly by preference, partly by devotion to his art, and partly because he kept men at a distance by his manner.[3] Not that Michael Angelo was sour or haughty;

[1] The majority of Michael Angelo's letters are written on domestic matters—about the affairs of his brothers and his father. When they vexed him, he would break out into expressions like the following: 'Io son ito, da dodici anni in qua, tapinando per tutta Italia; sopportato ogni vergognia; patito ogni stento; lacerato il corpo mio in ogni fatica; messa la vita propria a mille pericoli, solo per aiutar la casa mia.' They are generally full of good counsel and sound love. How he loved his father may be seen in the *terza rima* poem on his death in 1534.

[2] Notice this expression in a letter to his father, written from Rome, about 1512, 'Bastivi avere del pane, e vivete ben con Cristo e poveramente; come fo io qua, che vivo meschinamente.' It does not seem that he ever altered this poor way of living. For his hiring at Bologna, in 1507, a single room with one bed in it, for himself and his three workmen, see Gotti, p. 58. His father in 1500 rebuked him for the meanness of his establishment; *ibid.* p. 23. It appears that he was always sending money home.

[3] 'Io sto qua in grande afanno, e con grandissima fatica di corpo, e non ò amici di nessuna sorte, e none voglio: e non ò tanto tempo che io possa mangiare el bisognio mio.' Letter to Gismondo, published by Grimm. See, too, Sebastian del Piombo's letter to him of November 9, 1520: 'Ma fate paura a ognuno, insino a' papi.' Compare, too, the letter of Sebastian, Oct. 15, 1512, in which Julius is reported to have said, 'È terribile, come tu vedi, non se pol praticar con lui.' Again,

but he spoke his mind out very plainly, had no tolerance for fools, and was apt to fly into passions.[1] Time had now softened his temper and removed all causes of discouragement. He had survived every rival, and the world was convinced of his supremacy. Princes courted him; the Count of Canossa was proud to claim him for a kinsman; strangers, when they visited Rome, were eager to behold in him its greatest living wonder.[2] His old age was the serene and splendid evening of a toilsome day. But better than all this, he now enjoyed both love and friendship.

If Michael Angelo could ever have been handsome is more than doubtful. Early in his youth the quarrelsome and vain Torrigiani broke his nose with a blow of the fist, when they were drawing from Masaccio's frescoes in the Carmine together.[3] Thenceforth the artist's soul looked forth from a sad face, with small grey eyes, flat nostrils, and rugged weight of jutting brows. Good care was thus taken that light love should not trifle with the man who was destined to be the prophet of his age in art. Like Beethoven, he united a loving nature, sensitive to beauty and desirous of affection, with a rude exterior. He seemed incapable of attaching himself to any merely mortal object, and wedded the ideal. In that century of intrigue and amour, we hear of nothing to

Michael Angelo writes: 'Sto sempesolo, vo poco attorno e non parlo a persona e massino di fiorentini.' Gotti, p. 255.

[1] When anything went wrong with him, he became moody and vehement: 'Non vi maravigliate che io vi abbi scritto alle volte cosi stizosamente, che io ò alle volte di gran passione, per molte cagioni che avengono a chi è fuor di casa.' So he writes to his father in 1498. A letter to Luigi del Riccio of 1545, is signed 'Michelagnolo Buonarroti non pittore, nè scultore, nè architettore, ma quel che voi volete, ma none briaco, come vi dissi, in casa.'

[2] See the letters of Cosimo de' Medici, Gotti, pp. 301–313, the letter of Count Alessandro da Canossa, *ibid.* p. 4, and Pier Vettori's letter to Borghini, about the visit of some German gentlemen, *ibid.* p. 315.

[3] See the story as told by Torrigiani himself in Cellini, ed. Le Monnier, p. 23.

imply that Michael Angelo was a lover till he reached the age of sixty. How he may have loved in the earlier periods of his life, whereof no record now remains, can only be guessed from the tenderness and passion outpoured in the poems of his latter years. That his morality was pure and his converse without stain, is emphatically witnessed by both Vasari and Condivi.[1] But that his emotion was intense, and that to beauty in all its human forms he was throughout his life a slave, we have his own sonnets to prove.

In the year 1534 he first became acquainted with the noble lady Vittoria, daughter of Fabrizio Colonna, and widow of the Marquis of Pescara. She was then aged forty-four, and had nine years survived the loss of a husband she never ceased to idolise.[2] Living in retirement in Rome, she employed her leisure with philosophy and poetry. Artists and men of letters were admitted to her society. Among the subjects she had most at heart was the reform of the Church and the restoration of religion to its evangelical purity. Between her and Michael Angelo a tender affection sprang up based upon the sympathy of ardent and high-seeking natures. If love be the right name for this exalted and yet fervid attachment, Michael Angelo may be said to have loved her with all the pent-up forces of his heart. None of his works display a predilection for girlish beauty, and it is probable that her intellectual distinction and mature womanhood touched him even more than if she had been younger. When they were together in Rome they met frequently for con-

[1] After saying that he talked of love like Plato, Condivi continues: 'Non sentì mai uscir di quella bocca se non parole onestissime, e che avevan forza d' estinguere nella gioventù ogni incomposto e sfrenato desiderio che in lei potesse cadere.' Compare Scipione Ammirato, quoted by Guasti, 'Le Rime,' p. xi.

[2] Her intense affection for the Marquis of Pescara, to whom she had been betrothed by her father at the age of five, is sufficiently proved by those many sonnets and *canzoni* in which she speaks of him as her Sun.

versation on the themes of art and piety they both held dear. Of these discourses a charming record has been preserved to us by the painter Francis of Holland.[1] When they were separated they exchanged poems and wrote letters, some of which remain. On the death of Vittoria, in 1547, the light of life seemed to be extinguished for our sculptor. It is said that he waited by her bed-side, and kissed her hand when she was dying. The sonnets he afterwards composed show that his soul followed her to heaven.

Another friend whom Michael Angelo found in this last stage of life, and whom he loved with only less warmth than Vittoria, was a young Roman of perfect beauty and of winning manners. Tommaso Cavalieri must be mentioned next to the Marchioness of Pescara as the being who bound this greatest soul a captive.[2] Both Cavalieri and Vittoria are said to have been painted by him, and these are the only two portraits he is reported to have executed. It may here be remarked that nothing is more characteristic of his genius than the determination to see through nature, to pass beyond the actual to the abstract, and to use reality only as a stepping-stone to the ideal. This artistic Platonism was the source both of his greatness and his mannerism. As men choose to follow Blake or Ruskin, they may praise or blame him; yet blame and praise pronounced on such a matter with regard to such a man are equally impertinent and insignificant. It is enough for the critic to note with reverence that thus and thus the spirit that was in him worked and moved.

[1] See Grimm, vol. ii.

[2] See the Sonnets translated in my Appendix and in my *Sonnets of Michael Angelo and Campanella*, London, Smith & Elder, 1878. See also the letters to Cavalieri, quoted by Gotti, pp. 231, 232, 234. It is surely strained criticism to conjecture, as Gotti has done, that these epistles were meant for Vittoria, though written to Cavalieri. Taken together with the sonnets and the letter of Bartolommeo Angiolini (Gotti, p. 233), they seem to me to prove only Michael Angelo's warm love for this young man.

When we read the sonnets addressed to Vittoria Colonna and Cavalieri, we find something inexpressibly pathetic in this pure and fervent worship of beauty, when the artist with a soul still young had reached the limit of the years of man. Here and there we trace in them an echo of his youth. The Platonic dialogues he heard while yet a young man at the suppers of Lorenzo, reappear converted to the very substance of his thought and style. At the same time Savonarola resumes ascendency over his mind; and when he turns to Florence, it is of Dante that he speaks.

At last the moment came when this strong solitary spirit, much suffering and much loving, had to render its account. It appears from a letter written to Lionardo Buonarroti on February 15, 1564, that his old servant Antonio del Francese, the successor of Urbino in his household, together with Tommaso Cavalieri and Daniello Ricciarelli of Volterra, attended him in his last illness. On the 18th of that month having bequeathed his soul to God, his body to the earth, and his worldly goods to his kinsfolk, praying them on their deathbed to think upon Christ's passion, he breathed his last. His corpse was transported to Florence, and buried in the church of S. Croce, with great pomp and honour, by the Duke, the city, and the Florentine Academy.

CHAPTER IX

LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI

His Fame—His Autobiography—Its Value for the Student of History, Manners, and Character, in the Renaissance—Birth, Parentage, and Boyhood—Flute-playing—Apprenticeship to Marcone—Wanderjahr—The Goldsmith's Trade at Florence—Torrigiani and England—Cellini leaves Florence for Rome—Quarrel with the Guasconti—Homicidal Fury—Cellini a Law to Himself—Three Periods in his Manhood—Life in Rome—Diego at the Banquet—Renaissance Feeling for Physical Beauty—Sack of Rome—Miracles in Cellini's Life—His Affections—Murder of his Brother's Assassin—Sanctuary—Pardon and Absolution—Incantation in the Colosseum—First Visit to France—Adventures on the Way—Accused of Stealing Crown Jewels in Rome—Imprisonment in the Castle of S. Angelo—The Governor—Cellini's Escape—His Visions—The Nature of his Religion—Second Visit to France—The Wandering Court—Le Petit Nesle—Cellini in the French Law Courts—Scene at Fontainebleau—Return to Florence—Cosimo de' Medici as a Patron—Intrigues of a petty Court—Bandinelli—The Duchess—Statue of Perseus—End of Cellini's Life—Cellini and Machiavelli.

Few names in the history of Italian art are more renowned than that of Benvenuto Cellini. This can hardly be attributed to the value of his extant works; for though, while he lived, he was the greatest goldsmith of his time, a skilled medallist and an admirable statuary, few of his many masterpieces now survive. The plate and armour that bear his name, are only in some rare instances genuine; and the bronze 'Perseus' in the Loggia de' Lanzi at Florence remains almost alone to show how high he ranked among the later Tuscan sculptors. If, therefore, Cellini had been judged merely by the authentic

productions of his art, he would not have acquired a celebrity unique among his fellow-workers of the sixteenth century. That fame he owes to the circumstance that he left behind him at his death a full and graphic narrative of his stormy life. The vivid style of this autobiography dictated by Cellini while still engaged in the labour of his craft, its animated picture of a powerful character, the variety of its incidents, and the amount of information it contains, place it high both as a life-romance and also as a record of contemporary history. After studying the laboured periods of Varchi, we turn to these memoirs, and view the same events from the standpoint of an artisan conveying his impressions with plebeian raciness of phrase. The sack of Rome, the plague and siege of Florence, the humiliation of Clement VII., the pomp of Charles V. at Rome, the behaviour of the Florentine exiles at Ferrara, the intimacy between Alessandro de' Medici and his murderer, Lorenzino, the policy of Paul III., and the method pursued by Cosimo at Florence, are briefly but significantly touched upon—no longer by the historian seeking causes and setting forth the sequence of events, but by a shrewd observer interested in depicting his own part in the great game of life. Cellini haunted the private rooms of popes and princes; he knew the chief actors of his day, just as the valet knows the hero; and the picturesque glimpses into their life we gain from him, add the charm of colour and reality to history.

At the same time this book presents an admirable picture of an artist's life at Rome, Paris, and Florence. Cellini was essentially an Italian of the Cinque-cento. His passions were the passions of his countrymen; his vices were the vices of his time; his eccentricity and energy and vital force were what the age idealised as *virtù*. Combining rare artistic gifts with a most violent temper and a most obstinate will, he paints himself at one time as a conscientious craftsman, at another as a desperate bravo. He obeys his instincts and

indulges his appetites with the irreflective simplicity of an animal. In the pursuit of vengeance and the commission of murder he is self-reliant, coolly calculating, fierce and fatal as a tiger. Yet his religious fervour is sincere; his impulses are generous; and his heart on the whole is good. His vanity is inordinate; and his unmistakable courage is impaired, to Northern apprehension, by swaggering bravado.

The mixture of these qualities in a personality so natural and so clearly limned renders Cellini a most precious subject for the student of Renaissance life and character. Even supposing him to have been exceptionally passionate, he was made of the same stuff as his contemporaries. We are justified in concluding this not only from collateral evidence and from what he tells us, but also from the meed of honour he received. In Europe of the present day he could hardly fail to be regarded as a ruffian, a dangerous disturber of morality and order. In his own age he was held in high esteem and buried by his fellow-citizens with public ceremonies. A funeral oration was pronounced over his grave 'in praise both of his life and works, and also of his excellent disposition of mind and body.'[1] He dictated the memoirs that paint him as bloodthirsty, sensual, and revengeful, in the leisure of his old age, and left them with complacency to serve as witness of his manly virtues to posterity. Even Vasari, whom he hated, and who reciprocated his ill-will, records that 'he always showed himself a man of great spirit and veracity, bold, active, enterprising, and formidable to his enemies; a man, in short, who knew as well how to speak to princes as to exert himself in his art.'

Enough has been said to prove that Cellini was not inferior to the average morality of the Renaissance, and that we are

[1] 'In lode e onor della vita sua e opere d' esso, e buona disposizione della anima e del corpo.' *La Vita di Benvenuto Cellini*, Firenze, Le Monnier, 1852; *Documenti*, p. 578.

justified in accepting his life as a valuable historical document.[1] To give a detailed account of a book pronounced by Horace Walpole 'more amusing than any novel,' received by Parini and Tiraboschi as the most delightful masterpiece of Italian prose, translated into German by Goethe, and placed upon his index of select works by Auguste Comte, may seem superfluous. Yet I cannot afford to omit from my plan the most singular and characteristic episode in the private history of the Italian Renaissance. I need it for the concrete illustration of much that has been said in this and the preceding volumes of my work.

Cellini was born of respectable parents at Florence on the night of All Saints' Day in 1500, and was called Benvenuto to record his father's joy at having a son.[2] It was the wish of Giovanni Cellini's heart that his son should be a musician. Benvenuto in consequence practised the flute for many years attentively, though much against his will. At the age of fifteen so great was his desire to learn the arts of design that his father placed him under the care of the goldsmith Marcone. At the same time he tells us in his memoirs: 'I continued to play sometimes through complaisance to my father either upon the flute or the horn; and I constantly drew tears and deep sighs from him every time he heard me.' While engaged in the workshop of Marcone, Benvenuto came to blows with some young men who had attacked his brother, and was obliged to leave Florence for a time. At this period

[1] I do not by this mean to commit myself to the opinion that Cellini is accurate in details or truthful. On the contrary, it is impossible to read his life without feeling that his vanity and self-esteem led him to exaggeration and mis-statement. The value of the biography consists in its picturesqueness, its brilliant and faithful colouring, and its unconscious self-revelation of an energetic character.

[2] With regard to his pedigree Cellini tells a ridiculous story about a certain Fiorino da Cellino, one of Julius Cæsar's captains, who gave his name to Florence. For the arms of the Cellini family, see lib. i. cap. 50.

he visited Siena, Bologna, and Pisa, gaining his livelihood by working in the shops of goldsmiths, and steadily advancing in his art.

It must not be thought that this education was a mean one for so great an artist. Painting and sculpture in Italy were regarded as trades, and the artist had his *bottega* just as much as the cobbler or the blacksmith.[1] I have already had occasion to point out that an apprenticeship to goldsmith's work was considered at Florence an almost indispensable commencement of advanced art-study.[2] Brunelleschi, Botticelli, Orcagna, Verocchio, Ghiberti, Pollajuolo, Ghirlandajo, Luca della Robbia, all underwent this training before they applied themselves to architecture, painting, and sculpture. As the goldsmith's craft was understood in Florence, it exacted the most exquisite nicety in performance as well as design. It forced the student to familiarise himself with the materials, instruments, and technical processes of art; so that, later on in life, he was not tempted to leave the execution of his work to journeymen and hirelings.[3] No labour seemed too minute, no metal was too mean, for the exercise of the master-work-

[1] To enlarge upon this point is hardly necessary; or it would be easy to prove from documentary evidence that artists so eminent as Simone Martini, Gentile da Fabriano, Perugino, and Ghirlandajo kept open shops, where customers could buy the products of their craft from a highly-finished altar-piece down to a painted buckler or a sign to hang above the street-door. The commercial status of fine art in Italy was highly beneficial to its advancement, inasmuch as it implied a thorough technical apprenticeship for learners. The defective side of the system was apparent in great workshops like that of Raphael, who undertook painting-commissions quite beyond his powers of conscientious execution.

[2] See above, p. 91.

[3] See lib. ii. cap. 5, for the description of Francis I. visiting Cellini in his work-room. He finds him hammering away at the metal, and suggests that he might leave that labour to his prentices. Cellini replies that the excellence of his work would suffer if he did not do it himself.

man's skill; nor did he run the risk of becoming one of those half-amateurs in whom accomplishment falls short of first conception. Art ennobled for him all that he was called to do. Whether cardinals required him to fashion silver vases for their banquet-tables; or ladies wished the setting of their jewels altered; or a pope wanted the enamelled binding of a book of prayers; or men-at-arms sent swordblades to be damascened with acanthus foliage; or kings desired fountains and statues for their palace courts; or poets begged to have their portraits cast in bronze; or generals needed medals to commemorate their victories, or dukes new coins for their mint; or bishops ordered reliquaries for the altars of their patron saints; or merchants sought for seals and signet rings engraved with their device; or men of fashion asked for medallions of Leda and Adonis to fasten in their caps—all these commissions could be undertaken by a workman like Cellini. He was prepared for all alike by his apprenticeship to *orfevria*; and to all he gave the same amount of conscientious toil. The consequence was that, at the time of the Renaissance, furniture, plate, jewels, and articles of personal adornment were objects of true art. The mind of the craftsman was exercised afresh in every piece of work. Pretty things were not bought, machine-made, by the gross in a warehouse; nor was it customary, as now it is, to see the same design repeated with mechanical regularity in every house.

In 1518 Benvenuto returned to Florence and began to study the cartoons of Michael Angelo. He must have already acquired considerable reputation as a workman, for about this time Torrigiani invited him to go to England in his company and enter the service of Henry VIII. The Renaissance was now beginning to penetrate the nations of the North, and Henry and Francis vied with each other in trying to attract foreign artists to their capitals. It does not, however, appear

that the English king secured the services of men so distinguished as Lionardo da Vinci, Il Rosso, Primaticcio, Del Sarto, and Cellini, who shed an artificial lustre on the Court of France. Going to London then was worse than going to Russia now, and to take up a lengthy residence among *questi diavoli . . . quelle bestie di quegli Inglesi*, as Cellini politely calls the English, did not suit a Southern taste. He had, moreover, private reasons for disliking Torrigiani, who boasted of having broken Michael Angelo's nose in a quarrel. 'His words,' says Cellini, 'raised in me such a hatred of the fellow that, far from wishing to accompany him to England, I could not bear to look at him.' It may be mentioned that one of Cellini's best points was hero-worship for Michael Angelo. He never speaks of him except as *quel divino Michel Agnolo, il mio maestro*, and extols *la bella maniera* of the mighty sculptor to the skies. Torrigiani, as far as we can gather from Cellini's description of him, must have been a man of his own kidney and complexion: 'he was handsome, of consummate assurance, having rather the airs of a bravo than a sculptor; above all, his fierce gestures and his sonorous voice, with a peculiar manner of knitting his brows, were enough to frighten everyone that saw him; and he was continually talking of his valiant feats among those bears of Englishmen.' The story of Torrigiani's death in Spain is worth repeating. A grandee employed him to model a Madonna, which he did with more than usual care, expecting a great reward. His pay, however, falling short of his expectation, in a fit of fury he knocked his statue to pieces. For this act of sacrilege, as it was deemed, to the work of his own brain and hand, Torrigiani was thrown into the dungeons of the Inquisition. There he starved himself to death in 1522 in order to escape the fate of being burned. This story helps to explain why the fine arts were never well developed in Spain, and why they

languished after the introduction of the Holy Office into Italy.[1]

Instead of emigrating to England, Benvenuto, after a quarrel with his father about the obnoxious flute-playing, sauntered out one morning toward the gate of S. Piero Gattolini. There he met a friend called Tasso, who had also quarrelled with his parents; and the two youths agreed, upon the moment, to set off for Rome. Both were nineteen years of age. Singing and laughing, carrying their bundle by turns, and wondering 'what the old folks would say,' they trudged on foot to Siena, there hired a return horse between them, and so came to Rome. This residence in Rome only lasted two years, which were spent by Cellini in the employment of various masters. At the expiration of that time he returned to Florence, and distinguished himself by the making of a marriage girdle for a certain Raffaello Lapaccini.[2] The fame of this and other pieces of jewellery roused against him the envy and malice of the elder goldsmiths, and led to a serious fray, in the course of which he assaulted a young man of the Guasconti family, and was obliged to fly disguised like a monk to Rome.

As this is the first of Cellini's homicidal quarrels, it is worth while to transcribe what he says about it. 'One day as I was leaning against the shop of these Guasconti, and talking with them, they contrived that a load of bricks should pass by at the moment, and Gherardo Guasconti pushed it against me in such wise that it hurt me. Turning suddenly and seeing that he was laughing, I struck him so hard upon

[1] See Yriarte, *Vie d'un Gentilhomme de Venise*, p. 439, for a process instituted by the Inquisition against Paolo Veronese.

[2] He calls it 'un chiavaquore di argento, il quale era in quei tempi chiamato così. Questo si era una cintura di tre dita larga, che alle spose novelle s' usava di fare.'

the temple that he fell down stunned. Then turning to his cousins, I said, That is how I treat cowardly thieves like you; and when they began to show fight, being many together, I, finding myself on flame, set hand to a little knife I had, and cried, If one of you leaves the shop, let another run for the confessor, for a surgeon won't find anything to do here.' Nor was he contented with this truculent behaviour; for when Gherardo recovered from his blow, and the matter had come before the magistrates, Cellini went to seek him in his own house. There he stabbed him in the midst of all his family, raging meanwhile, to use his own phrase, 'like an infuriated bull.'[1] It appears that on this occasion no one was seriously hurt; but the affair proved perilous to Cellini, since it was a mere accident that he had not killed more than one of the Guasconti. These affrays recur continually among the adventures recorded by Cellini in his Life. He says with comical reservation of phrase that he was 'naturally somewhat choleric;' and then describes the access of his fury as a sort of fever, lasting for days, preventing him from taking food or sleep, making his blood boil in his veins, inflaming his eyes, and never suffering him to rest till he revenged himself by murder or at least by blows. To enumerate all the people he killed or wounded, or pounded to a jelly in public brawls or private quarrels, in the pursuit of deliberate *vendetta* or under a sudden impulse of ungovernable rage, would take too long. We are forced by an effort to recall to mind the state of society at that time in Italy, in order to understand how it is that he can talk with unconcern and even self-complacency about his homicides. He makes himself accuser, judge, and executioner, and is quite satisfied with the goodness of his cause, the justice of his sentence, and the equity of his administration. In a sonnet written to

[1] 'Si come un toro invelenito.'

Bandinelli, he compares his own victims with the mangled statues of that sculptor, much to his own satisfaction.[1]

There is the same callousness of conscience in his record of spiteful acts that we should blush to think of—stabs in the dark, and such a piece of revenge as cutting the beds to bits in the house of an innkeeper who had offended him.[2] Nor does he speak with any shame of the savage cruelty with which he punished a woman who was sitting to him as a model, and whom he hauled up and down his room by the hair of her head, kicking and beating her till he was tired.[3] It is true that on this occasion he regrets having spoiled, in a moment of blind passion, the best arms and legs that he could find to draw from. Such episodes, to which it is impossible to allude otherwise than very briefly, illustrate with extraordinary vividness what I have already had occasion to say about the Italian sense of honour at this period.[4]

The consciousness of physical courage and the belief in his own moral superiority sustained Cellini in all his dangers and in all his crimes. Armed with his sword and dagger, and protected by his coat of mail, he was ready to stand against the world and fight his way towards any object he desired. When a man opposed his schemes or entered into competition with him as an artist, he swaggered up with hand on hilt and threatened to run him through the body if he did not mind his business. At the same time he attri-

[1] 'Living men have felt my blows: those many maimed and mutilated stones one sees, attest to your disgrace: the earth hides my bad work.' See the lines quoted by Perkins, *Tuscan Sculptors*, vol. ii. p. 140.

[2] Lib. i. cap. 79.

[3] Lib. ii. cap. 34. The whole history of this woman Caterina, and of the revenge he took upon her and his prentice Paolo, is one of the most extraordinary passages in the life.

[4] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, pp. 377–380.

butes the success of his own violence in quelling and maltreating his opponents to the providence of God. 'I do not write this narrative,' he says, 'from a motive of vanity, but merely to return thanks to God, who has extricated me out of so many trials and difficulties; who likewise delivers me from those that daily impend over me. Upon all occasions I pay my devotions to Him, call upon Him as my defender, and recommend myself to His care. I always exert my utmost efforts to extricate myself, but when I am quite at a loss, and all my powers fail me, then the force of the Deity displays itself—that formidable force which, unexpectedly, strikes those who wrong and oppress others, and neglect the great and honourable duty which God has enjoined on them.' I shall have occasion later on to discuss Cellini's religious opinions; but here it may be remarked that the feeling of this passage is thoroughly sincere and consistent with the spirit of the times. The separation between religion and morality was complete in Italy.[1] Men made their own God and worshipped him; and the God of Cellini was one who always helped those who began to help themselves by taking justice into their own hands.

From the date of his second visit to Rome in 1523, Cellini's life divides itself into three periods, the first spent in the service of Popes Clement VII. and Paul III., the second in Paris at the Court of Francis, and the third at Florence under Cosimo de' Medici.

On arriving in Rome, his extraordinary abilities soon brought him into notice at the Court. The Chigi family, the Bishop of Salamanca, and the Pope himself employed him to make various jewels, ornaments, and services of plate. In consequence of a dream in which his father appeared and warned him not to neglect music, under pain of the paternal malediction, he accepted a post in the Papal band. The

[1] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, pp. 362–363.

old bugbear of flute-playing followed him until his father's death, and then we hear no more of it. The history of this portion of his life is among the most entertaining passages of his biography. Drawing the Roman ruins, shooting pigeons, scouring the Campagna on a pony like a shaggy bear, fighting duels, prosecuting love-affairs, defending his shop against robbers, skirmishing with Moorish pirates on the shore by Cerveterra, stabbing, falling ill of the plague and the French sickness—these adventures diversify the account he gives of masterpieces in gold and silver ware. The literary and artistic society of Rome at this period was very brilliant. Painters, sculptors, and goldsmiths mixed with scholars and poets, passing their time alternately in the palaces of dukes and cardinals and in the lodgings of gay women. Bohemianism of the wildest type was combined with the manners of the great world. A little incident described at some length by Cellini brings this varied life before us. There was a club of artists, including Giulio Romano and other pupils of Raphael, who met twice a week to sup together and to spend the evening in conversation, with music and the recitation of sonnets. Each member of this company brought with him a lady. Cellini, on one occasion, not being provided for the moment with an *innamorata*, dressed up a beautiful Spanish youth called Diego as a woman, and took him to the supper. The ensuing scene is described in the most vivid manner. We see before us the band of painters and poets, the women in their bright costumes, the table adorned with flowers and fruit, and, as a background to the whole picture, a trellis of jasmines with dark foliage and starry blossoms. Diego, called Pomona, with regard doubtless to his dark and ruddy beauty, is unanimously proclaimed the fairest of the fair. Then a discovery of his sex is made; and the adventure leads, as usual in the doings of Cellini, to daggers, midnight ambushes, and vendettas that only end with bloodshed.

An episode of this sort may serve as the occasion for observing that the artists of the late Renaissance had become absorbed in the admiration of merely carnal beauty. With the exception of Michael Angelo and Tintoretto, there was no great master left who still pursued an intellectual ideal. The Romans and the Venetians simply sought and painted what was splendid and luxurious in the world around them. Their taste was contented with well-developed muscles, gorgeous colour, youthful bloom, activity of limb, and grace of outline. The habits of the day, voluptuous yet hardy, fostered this one-sided development of the arts; while the asceticism of the Middle Ages had yielded to a pagan cult of sensuality. To draw *un bel corpo ignudo* with freedom was now the *ne plus ultra* of achievement. How to express thought or to indicate the subtleties of emotion, had ceased to be the artist's aim. We have already noticed the passionate love of beauty which animated the great masters of the golden age. This, in the less elevated natures of the craftsmen who succeeded them, and under the conditions of advancing national corruption, was no longer refined or restrained by delicacy of feeling or by loftiness of aim. It degenerated into soulless animalism. The capacity for perceiving and for reproducing what is nobly beautiful was lost. Vulgarity and coarseness stamped themselves upon the finest work of men like Giulio Romano. At this crisis it was proved how inferior was the neo-paganism of the sixteenth century to the paganism of antiquity it aped. Mythology preserved Greek art from degradation, and connected a similar enthusiasm for corporeal beauty with the thoughts and aspirations of the Hellenic race. The Italians lacked this safeguard of a natural religion. To throw the Christian ideal aside, and to strive to grasp the classical ideal in exchange, was easy. But paganism alone could give them nothing but its vices; it was incapable of communicating its real source of life—its poetry, its faith,

its cult of nature. Art, therefore, as soon as the artists pronounced themselves for sensuality, merged in a skilful selection and reproduction of elegant forms, and nothing more. A handsome youth upon a pedestal was called a god. A duke's mistress on Titian's canvas passed for Aphrodite. Andrea del Sarto's faithless wife figured as Madonna. Cellini himself, though sensitive to every kind of physical beauty—as we gather from what he tells us of Cencio, Diego, Faustina, Paolino, Angelica, Ascanio—has not attempted to animate his 'Perseus,' or his 'Ganymede,' or his 'Diana of Fontainebleau,' with a vestige of intellectual or moral loveliness. The vacancy of their expression proves the degradation of an art that had ceased to idealise anything beyond a faultless body. Not thus did the Greeks imagine even their most sensual divinities. There is at least a thought in Faun and Satyr. Cellini's statues have no thought; their blank animalism corresponds to the condition of their maker's soul.[1]

When Rome was carried by assault in 1527, and the Papal Court was besieged in the castle of S. Angelo, Cellini played the part of bombardier. It is well known that he claims to have shot the Constable of Bourbon dead with his own hand, and to have wounded the Prince of Orange; nor does there seem to be any adequate reason for discrediting his narrative. It is certain that he was an expert marksman, and that he did Clement good service by directing the artillery of S. Angelo. If we believed all his assertions, however, we should have to suppose that nothing memorable happened without his intervention. In his own eyes his whole life was a miracle. The very hailstones that fell upon his head could not be grasped in both hands. His guns and powder brought down birds no other marksman had a chance of hitting.

[1] This might be further illustrated by analysing Cellini's mode of loving. He never rises above animal appetite.

When he was a child, he grasped a scorpion without injury, and saw a salamander 'living and enjoying himself in the hottest flames.' After his fever at Rome in 1535, he threw off from his stomach a hideous worm—hairy, speckled with green, black, and red—the like whereof the doctors never saw.[1] When he finally escaped from the dungeons of S. Angelo in 1539, a luminous appearance like an aureole settled on his head, and stayed there for the rest of his life.[2] These facts are related in the true spirit of Jerome Cardan, Paracelsus, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, and Sir Thomas Browne. Cellini doubtless believed in them; but they warn us to be cautious in accepting what he says about his exploits, since imagination and self-conceit could so far distort his judgment.

It may be regretted that Cellini has not given a fuller account of the memorable sack of Rome. Yet, confining himself almost wholly to his own adventures, he presents a very vivid picture of the sad life led by the Pope and cardinals, vainly hoping for succour from Urbino, wrangling together about the causes of the tragedy, sewing the crown jewels into their doublets, and running the perils of the siege with common soldiers on the ramparts. When peace at last was signed, Cellini paid a visit to Florence, and found that his father and some other relatives had died of plague.[3] His brother Cecchino, however, who was a soldier in the Bande Nere of Giovanni de' Medici, and his sister Liperata survived. With them he spent a pleasant evening; for Liperata having 'for a while lamented her father, her sister, her husband, and a little son that she had been deprived of, went to

[1] Lib. i. cap. 85. 'Nel qual vomito mi uscì dello stomaco un verme piloso, grande un quarto di braccio: e' peli erano grandi ed il verme era bruttissimo, macchiato di diversi colori, verdi, neri e rossi.'

[2] Lib. i. cap. 128.

[3] Notice lib. i. cap. 40, p. 90, the dialogue between Cellini and the old woman, on his return to the paternal house: 'Oh dimmi, gobba perversa,' &c.

prepare supper, and during the rest of the evening there was not a word more spoken of the dead, but much about weddings. Thus we supped together with the greatest cheerfulness and satisfaction imaginable.' In these sentences there is no avowal of hard-heartedness; only the careless familiarity with loss and danger, engendered by war, famine, plague, and personal adventures in those riotous times.[1] Cellini gladly risked his life in a quarrel for his friends; but he would not sadden the present by reflecting on inevitable accidents. This elastic temper permeates his character. His affections were strong, but transient. The one serious love-affair he describes, among a multitude of mere debaucheries, made him miserable for a few days. His mistress, Angelica, ran away, and left him 'on the point of losing his senses or dying of grief.' Yet, when he found her again, a short time sufficed to satisfy his longing, and he turned his back with jibes upon her when she bargained about money.

It is worthy of notice that, at the same time, he was an excellent son and brother. His sister was left a widow with two children; whereupon he took them all into his house, without bragging about what appears to have been the best action of his life. In the same spirit he conscientiously performed what he conceived to be his duty to Cecchino, murdered by a musketeer in Rome. After nursing his revenge till he was nearly mad, he stole out one evening and stabbed the murderer in the back.[2] So violent was the blow that he could not extricate his dagger from the man's spine, but had to leave it sticking in his nape. Next to his own egotism the strongest feelings in Cellini were domestic; and he showed them at one moment by charity to his sister's family, at another by a savage assassination.

[1] 'Per essere il mondo intenebrato di peste e di guerra,' is a phrase of Cellini's, i. 40.

[2] Lib. i. cap. 51.

After killing the musketeer, Cellini retired for refuge to the house of Alessandro de' Medici, Duke of Città di Penna, who had been his brother's patron. The matter reached the Pope's ears, for whom Benvenuto was at work upon crown jewels. Clement sent for him, and simply said: 'Now you have recovered your health, Benvenuto, take care of yourself.' This shows how little they thought of homicide in Rome. After killing a man, some powerful protector had to be sought, who was usually a cardinal, since the cardinals had right of sanctuary in their palaces. There the assassin lay in hiding, in order to avoid his victim's friends and relatives, until such time as a pardon and safe-conduct and absolution had been obtained from his Holiness. When Cellini, soon after this occurrence, stabbed a private enemy, by name Pompeo, two cardinals were anxious to screen him from pursuit, and disputed the privilege of harbouring so talented a criminal.[1] The Pope, with marvellous good-humour, observed: 'I have never heard of the death of Pompeo, but often of Benvenuto's provocation; so let a safe-conduct be instantly made out, and that will secure him from all manner of danger.' A friend of Pompeo's who was present, ventured to insinuate that this was dangerous policy. The Pope put him down at once by saying, 'You do not understand these matters; I would have you know that men who are unique in their profession, like Benvenuto, are not subject to the laws.' Whether Paul really said these words, may be doubted; but it is clear that much was conceded to a clever workman, and that the laws were a mere *brutum fulmen*. No man of spirit appealed to them. Cellini, for example, was poisoned by a parish priest near Florence:[2] yet he never brought the man to justice;

[1] Lib. i. cap. 74. Clement was dead, and Paul III. had just been elected, 1534. Paul sent Cellini a safe-conduct and pardon for Pompeo's murder to Florence in 1535. Lib. i. cap. 81.

[2] Lib. ii. cap. 104.

and in the case of his own murders, he only dreaded the retaliation of his victims' kinsmen. On one occasion, indeed, the civil arm came down upon him; when the city guard attempted to arrest him for Pompeo's assassination. He beat them off with swords and sticks; and, after all, it appeared that they were only acting at the instigation of Pier Luigi Farnese, whom Benvenuto had offended.

During his residence at Rome, Cellini witnessed an incantation conducted in the Colosseum by a Sicilian priest and necromancer. The conjurer and the artist, accompanied by two friends, and by a boy, who was to act as medium, went by night to the amphitheatre. The magic circle was drawn; fires were lighted, and perfumes scattered on the flames. Then the spirit-seer began his charms, calling in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, or what passed for such, upon the leaders of the hosts of hell. The whole hollow space now filled with phantoms, surging up by legions, rushing down from the galleries, issuing from subterranean caverns, and wheeling to and fro with signs of fury. All the party, says Cellini, were thrown into consternation, except himself, who, though terribly afraid, kept up the fainting spirits of the rest. At last the conjurer summoned courage to inquire when Cellini might hope to be restored to his lost love, Angelica;—for this was the trivial object of the incantation. The demons answered (how we are not told) that he would meet her ere a month had passed away. This prophecy, as it happened, was fulfilled. Then they redoubled their attacks; the necromancer kept crying out that the peril was most imminent, until the matin bells of Rome swung through the darkness, freeing them at last from fear. As they walked home, the boy, holding the Sicilian by his robe and Benvenuto by his mantle, told them that he still saw giants leaping with fantastic gestures on their path, now running along the house

roofs, and now dancing on the earth. Each one of them that night dreamed in his bed of devils.[1]

The interest of this incident is almost wholly picturesque. It throws but little light upon the superstitions of the age.[2] The magnitude of the Colosseum, the popular legends concerning its magical origin, and the terrible uses of blood to which it had been put, invested this building with peculiar mystery. Robbers haunted the huge caves. Rubbish and weeds choked the passages. Sickly trees soared up from darkness into light among the porches, and the moon peered through the empty vomitories. If we call imagination to our aid, and place the necromancers and their brazier in the centre of this space;—if we fancy the priest's chaunted spells, the sacred names invoked in his unholy rites, the shuddering terror of the conscience-stricken accomplices, and Cellini with defiant mien but quailing heart, we can well believe that he saw more than the amphitheatre contained. Whether the spectres were projected by the conjurer from a magic lantern on the smoke that issued from his heaps of blazing wood, so that the volumes of vapour, agitated by the wind and rolling in thick spirals, showed them retreating and advancing, and varying in shape and number, is a matter for conjecture. Cellini firmly believed that he had been environed by living squadrons of the spirits of the damned.

The next four years were spent by Cellini chiefly in Rome, in peril of his life at several seasons, owing to the animosity of Pier Luigi Farnese. One journey he took at this period to Venice, passing through Ferrara, where he came to blows with the Florentine exiles. It is interesting to find the respectable historian Jacopo Nardi involved, if only as a peace-

[1] Lib. i. cap. 64.

[2] See, however, what is said about the mountain villages of Norcia being good for incantations. That district in Roman times was famous for such superstitions. Burckhardt, *Die Cultur der Renaissance in Italien*, pp. 427–428, gives curious information on this topic.

maker, in this affray.[1] He also visited Florence and cast dies for Alessandro's silver coinage. It was here that he found opportunities of observing the perilous intimacy between the Duke of Cività di Penna and his cousin—*quel pazzo malinconico filosofo di Lorenzino.*[2] In April 1537, having quarrelled with the Pope, who seems to have adopted Pier Luigi's prejudice against him, Cellini set out for France with two of his workmen. They passed through Florence, Bologna, Venice, and Padua, staying in the last place to model a medallion portrait of Pietro Bembo;[3] then they crossed the Grisons by the Bernina and Albula passes. We hear nothing about this part of the journey, except that the snow was heavy, and that they ran great danger of their lives. Cellini must have traversed some of the most romantic scenery of Switzerland at the best season of the year; yet not a word escapes him about the beauty of the Alps or the wonder of the glaciers, which he saw for the first time. The pleasure we derive from contemplating savage scenery was unknown to the Italians of the sixteenth century; the height and cold, the gloom and solitude of mountains struck them with a sense of terror or of dreariness. On the Lake of Wallenstadt Cellini met with a party of Germans, whom he hated as cordially as an Athenian of the age of Pericles might have loathed the Scythians for their barbarism.[4] The

[1] Lib. i. cap. 76.

[2] Lib. i. cap. 88. 'That mad melancholy philosopher Lorenzino.' Cf. i. 80 and 81. 'Molte volte lo trovavo a dormicchiare dopo desinare con quel suo Lorenzino, che poi l' ammazzò, e non altri; ed io molto mi maravigliavo che un duca di quella sorte così si fidava. . . . . il duca' che lo teneva quando per pazzericcio, e quando per poltrone.' Cf. again, cap. 89.

[3] This glimpse of Bembo in his Paduan villa is very pleasing. Lib. i. cap. 94.

[4] 'Quei diavoli di quei gentiluomini tedeschi.' This is, however, the language he uses about nearly all foreigners—Spaniards, French, and English.

Italians embarked in one boat, the Germans in another; Cellini being under the impression that the Northern lakes would not be so likely to drown him as those of his own country. However, when a storm swept down the hills, he took a terrible fright, and compelled the boatmen at the point of the poniard to put him and his company ashore. The description of their struggles to drag their heavily laden horses over the uneven ground near Wesen, is extremely graphic, and gives a good notion of the dangers of the road in those days.[1] That night they 'heard the watch sing at all hours very agreeably; and as the houses of that town were all of wood, he kept bidding them to take care of their fires.' Next day they arrived, not without other accidents, at Zurich, 'a marvellous city, as clear and polished as a jewel.' Thence by Solothurn, Lausanne, Geneva, and Lyons, they made their way to Paris.

This long and troublesome journey led to nothing, for Cellini grew weary of following the French Court about from place to place; his health too failed him, and he decided that he would rather die in Italy than France.[2] Accordingly he returned to Rome, and there, not long after his arrival, he was arrested by the order of Pope Paul III.[3] The charge against him, preferred by one of his own prentices, was this. During the siege of Rome, he had been employed by Clement to melt down the tiaras and papal ornaments, in order that the precious stones might be conveyed away in secrecy. He did so; and afterwards confessed to having kept a portion of the gold filings found in the cinders of his brazier during the operation. For this crime Clement gave him absolution.[4] Now, however, he was accused of having stolen gold and

[1] Lib. i. cap. 96. 'Io ero tutto armato di maglia con istivali grossi e con uno scoppietto in mano, e pioveva quanto Iddio ne sapeva mandare,' &c.

[2] Lib. i. cap. 98. [3] *Ib.* cap. 101. [4] See lib. i. cap. 38, 43.

jewels to the amount of nearly eighty thousand ducats. 'The avarice of the Pope, but more that of his bastard, then called Duke of Castro,' inclined Paul to believe this charge; and Pier Luigi was allowed to farm the case. Cellini was examined by the Governor of Rome and two assessors; in spite of his vehement protestations of innocence, the absence of any evidence against him, and the sound arguments adduced in his defence, he was committed to the castle of S. Angelo. When he received his sentence, he called heaven and earth to witness, thanking God that he had 'the happiness not to be confined for some error of his sinful nature, as generally happens to young men.' Whereupon 'the brute of a Governor replied, Yet you have killed enough men in your time.' This remark was pertinent; but it provoked a torrent of abuse and a long enumeration of his services from the virtuous Cellini.

The account of this imprisonment, and especially of the hypochondriacal Governor who thought he was a bat and used to flap his arms and squeak when night was coming on, is highly entertaining.[1] Not less interesting is the description of Cellini's daring escape from the castle. In climbing over the last wall, he fell and broke his leg, and was carried by a waterman to the palace of the Cardinal Cornaro. There he lay in hiding, visited by all the rank and fashion of Rome, who were not a little curious to see the hero of so perilous an escapade. Cornaro promised to secure his pardon, but eventually exchanged him for a bishopric. This remarkable proceeding illustrates the manners of the Papal Court. The cardinal wanted a benefice for one of his followers, and the Pope wished to get his son's enemy once more into his power. So the two ecclesiastics bargained together, and by mutual kind offices attained their several ends.

[1] The Governor, perplexed by Cellini's vaunt that if he only tried he was sure he could fly, put him under strict guard, saying, 'Benvenuto è un pipistrello contrafatto, ed io sono un pipistrello da dovero.'

Cellini with his broken leg went back to languish in his prison. He found the flighty Governor furious because he had 'flown away,' eluding his bat's eyes and wings. The rigour used towards him made him dread the worst extremities. Cast into a condemned cell, he first expected to be flayed alive; and when this terror was removed, he perceived the crystals of a pounded jewel in his food. According to his own account of this mysterious circumstance, Messer Durante Duranti of Brescia, one of Cellini's numerous enemies, had given a diamond of small value to be broken up and mixed with a salad served to him at dinner. The jeweller to whom this charge was entrusted, kept the diamond and substituted a beryl, thinking that the inferior stone would have the same murderous properties. To the avarice of this man Cellini attributed his escape from a lingering death by inflammation of the mucous membrane.[1]

During his first imprisonment he had occupied a fair chamber in the upper turret of the castle. He was now removed to a dungeon below ground where Fra Fojano, the reformer, had been starved to death. The floor was wet and infested with crawling creatures. A few reflected sunbeams slanting from a narrow window for two hours of the afternoon, was all the light that reached him. Here he lay, alone, unable to move because of his broken leg, with his hair and teeth falling away, and with nothing to occupy him but a Bible and a volume of Villani's 'Chronicles.' His spirit, however, was indomitable; and the passionate energy of the man, hitherto manifested in ungoverned acts of fury, took the form of ecstasy. He began the study of the Bible from the first chapter of Genesis, and trusting firmly to the righteousness of his own cause, compared himself to all the saints and martyrs of Scripture, men of whom the world was not worthy. He sang psalms, prayed continually, and

[1] Lib. i. cap. 125.

composed a poem in praise of his prison. With a piece of charcoal he made a great drawing of angels surrounding God the Father on the wall. Once only his courage gave way: he determined on suicide, and so placed a beam that it should fall on him like a trap. When all was ready, an unseen hand took violent hold of him, and dashed him on the ground at a considerable distance. From this moment his dungeon was visited by angels, who healed his broken leg, and reasoned with him of religion.

The mention of these visions reminds us that Cellini had become acquainted with Savonarola's writings during his first imprisonment.[1] Impressed with the grandeur of the prophet's dreams, and exalted by the reading of the Bible, he no doubt mistook his delirious fancies for angelic visitors, and in the fervour of his enthusiasm laid claim to inspiration. One of these hallucinations is particularly striking. He had prayed that he might see the sun at least in trance, if it were impossible that he should look on it again with waking eyes. But, while awake and in possession of his senses, he was hurried suddenly away and carried to a room, where the invisible power sustaining him appeared in human shape, 'like a youth whose beard is but just growing, with a face most marvellous, fair, but of austere and far from wanton beauty.' In that room were all the men who had ever lived and died on earth; and thence they two went together, and came into a narrow street, one side whereof was bright with sunlight. Then Cellini asked the angel how he might behold the sun; and the angel pointed to certain steps upon the side of a house. Up these Cellini climbed, and came into the full blaze of the sun, and, though dazzled by its brightness, he gazed steadfastly and took his fill. While he looked, the rays fell away upon the left side and the disk shone like a bath of molten gold. This surface swelled, and from the glory came

[1] Lib. i. cap. 105.

the figure of a Christ upon the cross, which moved and stood beside the rays. Again the surface swelled, and from the glory came the figure of Madonna and her Child; and at the right hand of the sun there knelt S. Peter in his sacerdotal robes, pleading Cellini's cause; and 'full of shame that such foul wrong should be done to Christians in his house.' This vision marvellously strengthened Cellini's soul, and he began to hope with confidence for liberty. When free again, he modelled the figures he had seen in gold.

The religious phase in Cellini's history requires some special comment, since it is precisely at this point that he most faithfully personifies the spirit of his age and nation. That he was a devout Catholic there is no question. He made two pilgrimages to Loreto, and another to S. Francis of Vernia. To S. Lucy he dedicated a golden eye after his recovery from an illness. He was, moreover, always anxious to get absolution from the Pope. More than this; he continually sustained himself at the great crises of his life, when in peril of imprisonment, while defending himself against assassins, and again on the eve of casting his 'Perseus,' by direct and passionate appeals to God. Yet his religion had but little effect upon his life; and he often used it as a source of moral strength in doing deeds repugnant to real piety. Like love, he put it off and on quite easily, reverting to it when he found himself in danger or bad spirits, and forgetting it again when he was prosperous. Thus in the dungeon of S. Angelo he vowed to visit the Holy Sepulchre if God would grant him to behold the sun. This vow he forgot until he met with disappointment at the Court of Francis, and then he suddenly determined to travel to Jerusalem. The offer of a salary of seven hundred crowns restored his spirits, and he thought no more about his vow.

While he loved his life so dearly and indulged so freely in the pleasures of this earth, he made a virtue of necessity as

soon as death approached, crying, 'The sooner I am delivered from the prison of this world, the better; especially as I am sure of salvation, being unjustly put to death.' His good opinion of himself extended to the certainty he felt of heaven. Forgetting his murders and debaucheries, he sustained his courage with devotion when all other sources failed. As to the divine government of the world, he halted between two opinions. Whether the stars or Providence had the upper hand, he could not clearly say; but by the stars he understood a power antagonistic to his will, by Providence a force that helped him to do what he liked. There is a similar confusion in his mind about the Pope. He goes to Clement submissively for absolution from homicide and theft, saying, 'I am at the feet of your Holiness, who have the full power of absolving, and I request you to give me permission to confess and communicate, that I may with your favour be restored to the divine grace.' He also tells Paul that the sight of Christ's vicar, in whom there is an awful representation of the divine Majesty, makes him tremble. Yet at another time he speaks of Clement being 'transformed to a savage beast,' and talks of him as 'that poor man Pope Clement.'[1] Of Paul he says that he 'believed neither in God nor in any other article of religion;' he sincerely regrets not having killed him by accident during the siege of Rome, abuses him for his avarice, casts his bastards in his teeth, and relates with relish the crime of forgery for which in his youth he was imprisoned in the castle of S. Angelo.[2] Indeed, the Italians treated the Pope as negroes treat their fetishes. If they had cause to dislike him, they beat and heaped insults on him—like the Florentines who described Sixtus IV. as 'leno matris suæ, adulterorum minister, diaboli vicarius,'

[1] Il Papa diventato così pessima bestia,' lib. i. 58; 'Il Papa entrato in un bestial furore,' *ib.* 60; 'Quel povero uomo di Papa Clemente,' *ib.* 103.

[2] *Ib.* 36, 101, 111.

and his spiritual offspring as 'simonia, luxus, homicidium, proditio, hæresis.' On the other hand, they really thought that he could open heaven and shut the gates of hell.

At the end of the year 1539, the Cardinal Ippolito d'Este appeared in Rome with solicitations from Francis I. that the Pope would release Cellini and allow him to enter his service.[1] Upon this the prison door was opened. Cellini returned to his old restless life of violence and pleasure. We find him renewing his favourite pastimes—killing, wantoning, disputing with his employers, and working diligently at his trade. The temporary saint and visionary becomes once more the bravo and the artist. A more complete parallel to the consequences of revivalism in Italy could not be found.[2] Meanwhile the first period of his history is closed and the second begins.

Cellini's account of his residence in France has much historical interest besides the charm of its romance. When he first joined the Court, he found Francis travelling from city to city with a retinue of eighteen thousand persons and twelve thousand horses. Frequently they came to places where no accommodation could be had, and the suite were lodged in wretched tents. It is not wonderful that Cellini should complain of the French being less civilised than the Italians of his time. Francis among his ladies and courtiers, pretending to a knowledge of the arts, sauntering with his splendid train into the goldsmith's workshop, encouraging Cellini's violence with a boyish love of mischief, vain and flattered, peevish, petulant, and fond of show, appears upon

[1] The scene is well described, lib. i. 127. The Pope was wont to have a weekly debauch, and the cardinal chose this favourable moment for his appeal: 'Gli usava una volta la settimana di fare una crapula assai gagliarda, perchè da poi la gomitava. . . . . Allora il papa, sentendosi appressare all' ora del suo vomito, e perchè la troppa abbundanzia del vino ancora faceva l' ufizio suo, disse,' &c.

[2] See Vol. I., *Age of the Despots*, p. 485.

these pages with a life-like vividness.[1] When the time came for settling in Paris, the King presented his goldsmith with a castle called Le Petit Nesle, and made him lord thereof by letters of naturalisation. This house stood where the Institute has since been built; of its extent we may judge from the number of occupations carried on within its precincts when Cellini entered into possession. He found there a tennis-court, a distillery, a printing press, and a factory of saltpetre, besides residents engaged in other trades. Cellini's claims were resisted. Probably the occupiers did not relish the intrusion of a foreigner. So he stormed the place and installed himself by force of arms. Similar violence was needed in order to maintain himself in possession; but this Cellini loved, and had he been let alone, it is probable he would have died of *ennui*.

Difficulties of all kinds, due in part to his ungovernable temper, in part to his ill-regulated life, in part to his ignorance of French habits, gathered round him. He fell into disfavour with Madame d'Estampes, the mistress of the King; and here it may be mentioned that many of his troubles arose from his inability to please noble women.[2] Proud, self-confident, overbearing, and unable to command his words or actions, Cellini was unfitted to pay court to princes. Then again he quarrelled with his brother artists, and made the Bolognese painter, Primaticcio, his enemy. After being attacked by assassins and robbers on more than one occasion, he was involved in two lawsuits. He draws a graphic picture of the French courts of justice, with their judge as grave as Plato, their advocates all chattering at once, their perjured Norman witnesses, and the ushers at the doors vociferating *Paix, paix, Satan, allez, paix.* In this cry Cellini recognised

[1] See especially the visit to the Paris workshop, lib. ii. cap. 15, and the scene in the Gallery at Fontainebleau, ib. 41.

[2] His quarrels, for example, with the Duchess of Florence.

the gibberish at the beginning of the seventh canto of Dante's 'Inferno.' But the most picturesque group in the whole scene presented to us is that made by Cellini himself, armed and mailed, and attended by his prentices in armour, as they walked into the court to browbeat justice with the clamour of their voice. If we are to trust his narrative, he fought his way out of one most dangerous trial by simple vociferation. Afterwards he took the law, as usual, into his own hands. One pair of litigants were beaten; Caterina was nearly kicked to death; and the attorneys were threatened with the sword.

In the midst of these disturbances, Cellini began some important works for Francis. At Paris the King employed him to make huge silver candelabra, and at Fontainebleau to restore the castle gate. For the château of Fontainebleau Cellini executed the nymph in bronze, reclining among trophies of the chase, which may still be seen in the Louvre. It is a long-limbed, lifeless figure, without meaning—a snuff-box ornament enlarged to a gigantic size. Francis, who cannot have had good taste in art, if what Cellini makes him say be genuine, admired these designs above the bronze copies of the Vatican marbles he had recently received. He seems to have felt some personal regard for Benvenuto, and to have done all he could to retain him in his service. The animosity of Madame d'Estampes, and a grudge against his old patron, Ippolito d'Este, however, determined the restless craftsman to quit Paris. Leaving his castle, his unfinished works, and other property behind him in the care of Ascanio, his friend and pupil, he returned alone to Italy. This step, taken in a moment of restless pique, was ever after regretted by Cellini, who looked back with yearning from Florence to the generosity of Francis.

Cosimo de' Medici was indeed a very different patron from Francis. Cautious, little-minded, meddling, with a true Florentine's love of bargaining and playing cunning tricks, he

pretended to protect the arts, but did not understand the part he had assumed. He was always short of money, and surrounded by old avaricious servants, through whose hands his meagre presents passed. As a connoisseur, he did not trust his own judgment, thus laying himself open to the intrigues of inferior artists. Henceforward a large part of Cellini's time was wasted in wrangling with the Duke's steward, squabbling with Bandinelli and Ammanati, and endeavouring to overcome the coldness or to meet the vacillations of his patron. Those who wish to gain insight into the life of an artist at Court in the sixteenth century, will do well to study attentively the chapters devoted by Cellini to his difficulties with the Duchess, and his wordy warfares with Bandinelli.[1] This atmosphere of intrigue and animosity was not uncongenial to Benvenuto; and as far as words and blows went, he almost always got the best of it. Nothing, for example, could be keener and more cutting than the very just criticism he made in Bandinelli's presence of his 'Hercules and Cacus.' 'Quel bestial buaccio Bandinello,' as he delights to name him, could do nothing but retort with vulgar terms of insult.[2]

The great achievement of this third period was the modelling and casting of the 'Perseus.' No episode in Cellini's biography is narrated with more force than the climax to his long-protracted labours, when at last, amid the chaos and confusion of innumerable accidents, the metal in his furnace liquefied and filled the mould. After the statue was uncovered in the Loggia de' Lanzi, where it now

[1] Lib. ii. cap. 83, 84, 87, 70, 71.

[2] 'That beastly big ox, Bandinelli.' *Cf.* cap. 70 for the critique. It may be said here, in passing, that the insult of Bandinelli, 'Oh sta cheto, soddomitaccio,' seems to have been justified by Benvenuto's conduct, though of course he carefully conceals it in his memoirs. After the charge brought against him by Cencio, for instance, he thought it better to leave Florence.—*Ib.* cap. 61, 62.

stands, Cellini achieved a triumph adequate to his own highest expectations. Odes and sonnets in Italian, Greek, and Latin, were written in its praise. Pontormo and Bronzino, the painters, loaded it with compliments. Cellini, ruffling with hand on hilt in silks and satins through the square, was pointed out to foreigners as the great sculptor who had cast the admirable bronze. It was, in truth, no slight distinction for a Florentine artist to erect a statue beneath the Loggia de' Lanzi in the square of the Signory. Every great event in Florentine history had taken place on that piazza. Every name of distinction among the citizens of Florence was connected with its monuments. To this day we may read the course of Florentine art by studying its architecture and sculpture; and not the least of its many ornaments, in spite of all that may be said against it, is the 'Perseus' of Cellini.

Cellini completed the 'Perseus' in 1554. His autobiography is carried down to the year 1562, when it abruptly terminates. It appears that in 1558 he received the tonsure and the first ecclesiastical orders; but two years later on he married a wife, and died at the age of sixty-nine, leaving three legitimate children. He was buried honourably, and a funeral oration was pronounced above his bier in the Chapter House of the Annunziata.

As a man, Cellini excites more interest than as an artist; and for this reason I have refrained from entering into minute criticism of his few remaining masterpieces. It has been well said that the two extremes of society, the statesman and the craftsman, find their point of meeting in Machiavelli and Cellini, inasmuch as both recognise no moral authority but the individual will.[1] The *virtù* extolled by Machiavelli is exemplified by Cellini. Machiavelli bids his prince ignore the laws; Cellini respects no tribunal and takes justice into

[1] Edgar Quinet, *Les Révolutions d'Italie*, p. 358.

his own hands. The word conscience does not occur in Machiavelli's phraseology of ethics; conscience never makes a coward of Cellini, and in the dungeons of S. Angelo he is visited by no remorse. If we seek a literary parallel for the statesman and the artist in their idealisation of force and personal character, we find it in Pietro Aretino. In him, too, conscience is extinct; for him, also, there is no respect of King or Pope; he has placed himself above law, and substituted his own will for justice. With his pen, as Cellini with his dagger, he assassinates; his cynicism serves him for a coat of armour. And so abject is society, so natural has tyranny become, that he extorts blackmail from monarchs, makes princes tremble, and receives smooth answers to his insults from Buonarroti. These three men, Machiavelli, Cellini, and Aretino, each in his own line, and with the proper differences that pertain to philosophic genius, artistic skill, and ribald ruffianism, sufficiently indicate the dissolution of the social bond in Italy. They mark their age as the age of adventurers, bandits, bullies, Ishmaelites, and tyrants.

CHAPTER X

THE EPIGONI

Full Development and Decline of Painting—Exhaustion of the old Motives—Relation of Lionardo to his Pupils—His Legacy to the Lombard School—Bernardino Luini—Gaudenzio Ferrari—The Devotion of the Sacri Monti—The School of Raphael—Nothing left but Imitation—Unwholesome Influences of Rome—Giulio Romano—Michael Angelesque Mannerists—Misconception of Michael Angelo—Correggio founds no School—Parmigianino—Macchinisti—The Bolognese—After-growth of Art in Florence—Andrea del Sarto—His Followers—Pontormo—Bronzino—Revival of Painting in Siena—Sodoma—His Influence on Pacchia, Beccafumi, Peruzzi—Garofalo and Dosso Dossi at Ferrara—The Campi at Cremona—Brescia, and Bergamo—The Decadence in the second half of the Sixteenth Century—The Counter-Reformation—Extinction of the Renaissance Impulse.

In the foregoing chapters I have not sought to write again the history of art, so much as to keep in view the relation between Italian art and the leading intellectual impulses of the Renaissance. In the masters of the sixteenth century—Lionardo, Raphael, Michael Angelo, Correggio, and the Venetians—the force inherent in the Italian genius for painting reached full development. What remained was but an after-bloom rapidly tending to decadence. To surpass those men in their own line seemed impossible. What they had achieved was so transcendent that imitation satisfied their successors; and if they refused imitation, originality had to be sought by deviating into extravagances. Meanwhile no new stock of thoughts had been acquired; and students of history are now

well aware that for really great art ideas common to the nation are essential. The motives suggested by mediæval Christianity, after passing through successive stages of treatment in the *quattrocento*, had received the grand and humane handling of the golden age. The motives of revived paganism in like manner were exhausted, and at this time the feeling for antiquity had lost its primal freshness. It might seem superfluous to carry this inquiry further, when we have thus confessedly attained the culminating point of painting. Yet the sketch attempted in this volume would be incomplete and liable to misinterpretation, if no account were taken of the legacy bequeathed to the next generation by the great masters.

Lionardo da Vinci formed, as we have seen, a school at Milan. It was the special good fortune of his pupils that what he actually accomplished, bore no proportion to the suggestiveness of his teaching and the fertility of his invention. Of finished work he left but little to the world; while his sketches and designs, the teeming thoughts of his creative brain, were an inestimable heritage. The whole of this rich legacy of masterpieces, projected, but not executed, was characterised by a feeling for beauty which has fallen to no other painter. When we examine the sketches in the Royal Collection at Windsor, we perceive that the exceeding sense of loveliness possessed by Lionardo could not have failed to animate his pupils with a high spirit of art. At the same time the extraordinary variety of his drawing—sometimes reminding us of German method, sometimes modern in the manner of French and English draughtsmen—by turns bold and delicate, broad and minute in detail—afforded to his school examples of perfect treatment in a multiplicity of different styles. There was no formality of fixed unalterable precedent in Lionardo, nothing for his scholars to repeat with the monotony of mannerism.

It remained for his disciples, each in his own sphere, with inferior powers and feebler intellect, to perpetuate the genius of their master. Thus the spirit of Lionardo continued to live in Lombardy after he was dead. There alone imitation was really fruitful, because it did not imply mere copying. Instead of attempting to give a fresh and therefore a strained turn to motives that had already received consummate treatment, Lionardo's successors were able to execute what he had planned but had not carried to completion. Nor was the prestige of his style so oppressive through the mass of pictures painted by his hand as to check individuality or to prevent the pupil from working out such portions of the master's vein as suited his own talent. Each found enough suggested, but not used, to give his special faculty free scope. This is in fact the reason why the majority of pictures ascribed to Lionardo are really the production of his school. They have the excellence of original work, but not such excellence as Lionardo could have given them. Their completion is due, as searching criticism proves, to lesser men; but the conception belongs to the greatest.

Andrea Salaino, Marco d'Oggiono, Francesco Melzi, Giovanni Antonio Beltraffio, and Cesare da Sesto, are all of them skilled workmen, losing and finding their individuality, as just described, in the manner of their master. Salaino brings exquisite delicacy of execution; d'Oggiono, wild and bizarre beauty; Melzi, the refinements of a miniaturist; Beltraffio, hard brilliancy of light and colour; Cesare da Sesto, somewhat of effeminate sweetness; and thus the qualities of many men emerge, to blend themselves again in what is Lionardo's own. It is surely not without significance that this metempsychosis of genius should have happened in the case of Lionardo, himself the magician of Renaissance art, the lover of all things double-natured and twin-souled.

Two painters of the Lombard school, Bernardino Luini and Gaudenzio Ferrari, demand separate notice. Without Lionardo it is difficult to say what Luini would have been: so thoroughly did he appropriate his teacher's type of face, and, in oil-painting, his refinement. And yet Luini stands on his own ground, in no sense an imitator, with a genius more simple and idyllic than Da Vinci's. Little conception of his charm can be formed by those who have not seen his frescoes in the Brera and S. Maurizio Maggiore at Milan, in the church of the Angeli at Lugano, or in the pilgrimage church of Saronno. To the circumstance of his having done his best work in places hardly visited until of late years, may in part perhaps be attributed the tardy recognition of a painter eminently fitted to be popular. Luini was essentially a fresco-painter. None, perhaps, of all the greatest Italian *frescanti* realised a higher quality of brilliancy without gaudiness, by the scale of colours he selected and by the purity with which he used them in simple combinations. His frescoes are never dull or heavy in tone, never glaring, never thin or chalky. He knew how to render them both luminous and rich, without falling into the extremes that render fresco-paintings often less attractive than oil-pictures. His feeling for loveliness of form was original and exquisite. The joy of youth found in Luini an interpreter only less powerful and even more tender than in Raphael. While he shared with the Venetians their sensibility to nature, he had none of their sensuousness or love of pomp. In idyllic painting of a truly great type I know of nothing more delightful than his figures of young musicians going to the marriage feast of Mary, nothing more graceful than the genius ivy-crowned and seated at the foot of the cross.[1] The sentiment for naïve and artless grace, so fully possessed by Luini, gave freshness to his treatment of conventional religious themes. Under his touch they

[1] Frescoes in the Brera and at Lugano.

appeal immediately to the most untutored taste, without the aid of realistic or sensational effects. Even S. Sebastian and S. Rocco, whom it is difficult to represent with any novelty of attitude or expression, became for him the motives of fresh poetry, unsought but truly felt.[1] Among all the Madonnas ever painted his picture of Mary with the espalier of white roses, and another where she holds the infant Christ to pluck a purple columbine, distinguish themselves by this engaging spontaneity. The frescoes of the marriage of the Virgin and of S. Catherine carried by angels to Mount Sinai might be cited for the same quality of freshness and unstudied poetry.[2]

When the subject demanded the exercise of grave emotion, Luini rose to the occasion without losing his simplicity. The 'Martyrdom of S. Catherine' and the fresco of Christ after the Flagellation are two masterpieces, wherein the depths of pathos have been sounded, and not a single note of discord is struck.[3] All harsh and disagreeable details are either eliminated, or so softened that the general impression, as in Pergolese's music, is one of profoundest and yet sweetest sorrow. Luini's genius was not tragic. The nearest approach to a dramatic motive in his work is the figure of the Magdalen kneeling before the cross, with her long yellow hair streaming over her shoulders, and her arms thrown backwards in an ecstasy of grief.[4] He did well to choose moments that stir tender sympathy—the piety of deep and calm devotion. How truly he felt them—more truly, I think, than Perugino in his best period—is proved by the

[1] S. Maurizio, on the Screen, inner church. Lugano in the Angeli.

[2] In the Brera. See also the Madonna, with Infant Christ, S. John, and a Lamb, at Lugano.

[3] Side chapel of S. Maurizio at Milan. These frescoes are, in my opinion, Luini's very best. The whole church is a wonderful monument of Lombard art.

[4] 'Crucifixion' at Lugano.

correspondence they awake in us. Like melodies, they create a mood in the spectator.

What Luini did not learn from Lionardo, was the art of composition. Taken one by one, the figures that make up his 'Marriage of the Virgin' at Saronno, are beautiful; but the whole picture is clumsily constructed; and what is true of this, may be said of every painting in which he attempted complicated grouping.[1] We feel him to be a great artist only where the subject does not demand the symmetrical arrangement of many parts.

Gaudenzio Ferrari was a genius of a different order, more robust, more varied, but less single-minded than Luini. His style reveals the influences of a many-sided, ill-assimilated education; blending the manners of Bramantino, Lionardo, and Raphael without proper fusion. Though Ferrari travelled much, and learned his art in several schools, he, like Luini, can only be studied in the Milanese district—at his birthplace Varallo, at Saronno, Vercelli, and Milan. It is to be regretted that a painter of such singular ability, almost unrivalled at moments in the expression of intense feeling and the representation of energetic movement, should have lacked a simpler training, or have been unable to adopt a manner more uniform. There is a strength of wing in his imaginative flight, a swiftness and impetuosity in his execution, and a dramatic force in his conception, that almost justify Lomazzo's choice of the eagle for his emblem. Yet he was unable to collect his powers, or to rule them. The distractions of an age that had produced its masterpieces, were too strong for him; and what he failed to find was balance. His picture of the 'Martyrdom of S. Catherine,' where reminiscences of Raphael and Lionardo mingle with the uncouth motives of an earlier style in a medley without unity of composition or harmony of

[1] See, for example, the oil-paintings in the cathedral of Como, so fascinating in their details, so lame in composition.

colouring, might be chosen as a typical instance of great resources misapplied.[1]

The most pleasing of Ferrari's paintings are choirs of angels, sorrowing or rejoicing, some of them exquisitely and originally beautiful, all animated with unusual life, and poised upon wings powerful enough to bear them—veritable 'birds of God.'[2] His dramatic scenes from sacred history, rich in novel motives and exuberantly full of invention, crowd the churches of Vercelli; while a whole epic of the Passion is painted in fresco above the altar of S. Maria delle Grazie at Varallo, covering the wall from basement to ceiling. The prodigality of power displayed by Ferrari makes up for much of crudity in style and confusion in aim; nor can we refuse the tribute of warmest admiration to a master, who, when the schools of Rome and Florence were sinking into emptiness and bombast, preserved the fire of feeling for serious themes. What was deadly in the neo-paganism of the Renaissance—its frivolity and worldliness, corroding the very sources of belief in men who made of art a decoration for their sensuous existence—had not penetrated to those Lombard valleys where Ferrari and Luini worked. There the devotion of the Sacri Monti still maintained an intelligence between the people and the artist, far more fruitful of results to painting than the patronage of splendour-loving cardinals and nobles.[3]

[1] In the Brera.

[2] Frescoes at Saronno and in the Sacro Monte at Varallo.

[3] The whole lake-district of Italy, where the valleys of Monte Rosa and the Simplon descend upon the plain of Lombardy, is rich in works of this school. At Luino and Lugano, on the island of San Giulio, and in the hill-set chapels of the Val Sesia, may be found traces of frescoes of incomparable beauty. One of these sites deserves special mention. Just at the point where the pathway of the Colma leaves the chestnut groves and meadows to join the road leading to Varallo, there stands a little chapel, with an open loggia of round Renaissance arches, designed and painted, according to tradition, by Ferrari, and without doubt

Passing from Lionardo to Raphael, we find exactly the reverse of what has hitherto been noticed. Raphael worked out the mine of his own thought so thoroughly—so completely exhausted the motives of his invention, and carried his style to such perfection—that he left nothing unused for his followers. We have seen that he formed a school of subordinates in Rome who executed his later frescoes after his designs. Some of these men have names that can be mentioned—Giulio Romano, of whom more hereafter; Perino del Vaga, the decorator of Genoese palaces in a style of overblown but gorgeous Raphaelism; Andrea Sabbatini, who carried the Roman tradition down to Naples; Francesco Penni, Giovanni da Udine, and Polidoro da Caravaggio. Their work, even while superintended by Raphael himself, began to show the signs of decadence. In his Roman manner the dramatic element was conspicuous; and to carry dramatic painting beyond the limits of good style in art is unfortunately easy. The Hall of Constantine, left unfinished at his death, still further proved how little his pupils could do without him.[1] When Raphael died, the breath whose might sustained and made them potent, ceased. For all the higher purposes of genuine art, inspiration passed from them as colour fades from eastern clouds at sunset, suddenly.

It has been customary to account for this rapid decline of the Roman school by referring to the sack of Rome in 1527. No doubt the artists suffered at that moment at least as severely as the scholars; their dispersion broke up a band of

representative of his manner. The harmony between its colours, so mellow in their ruin, its graceful arcades and quiet roofing, and the glowing tones of those granite mountains, with their wealth of vineyards, and their forests of immemorial chestnut trees, is perfect beyond words.

[1] This, the last of the Stanze, was only in part designed by Raphael. In spite of what I have said above, the 'Battle of Constantine,' planned by Raphael, and executed by Giulio, is a grand example of a pupil's power to carry out his master's scheme.

eminent painters, who might in combination and competition have still achieved great things. Yet the secret of their subsequent failure lay far deeper; partly in the full development of their master's style, already described; and partly in the social conditions of Rome itself. Patrons, stimulated by the example of the Popes, desired vast decorative works; but they expected these to be performed rapidly and at a cheap rate. Painters, familiarised with the execution of such undertakings, forgot that hitherto the conception had been not theirs but Raphael's. Mistaking hand-work for brain-work, they audaciously accepted commissions that would have taxed the powers of the master himself. Meanwhile moral earnestness and technical conscientiousness were both extinct. The patrons required show and sensual magnificence far more than thought and substance. They were not, therefore, deterred by the vacuity and poor conceptive faculty of the artists from employing them. What the age demanded was a sumptuous parade of superficial ornament, and this the pupils of Raphael felt competent to supply without much effort. The result was that painters who under favourable circumstances might have done some meritorious work, became mere journeymen contented with the soulless insincerity of cheap effects. Giulio Romano alone, by dint of robust energy and lurid fire of fancy flickering amid the smoke of his coarser nature, achieved a triumph in this line of labour. His Palazzo del Te will always remain the monument of a specific moment in Renaissance history, since it is adequate to the intellectual conditions of a race demoralised but living still with largeness and a sense of grandeur.

Michael Angelo formed no school in the strict sense of the word. Yet his influence was not the less felt on that account, nor less powerful than Raphael's in the same direction. During his manhood the painters Sebastian del Piombo,

Marcello Venusti, and Daniele da Volterra, had endeavoured to add the charm of oil-colouring to his designs; and long before his death, the seduction of his mighty mannerism had begun to exercise a fatal charm for all the schools of Italy. Painters incapable of fathoming his intention, unsympathetic to his rare type of intellect, and gifted with less than a tithe of his native force, set themselves to reproduce whatever may be justly censured in his works. To heighten and enlarge their style was reckoned a chief duty of aspiring craftsmen; and it was thought that recipes for attaining to this final perfection of the modern arts might be extracted without trouble from Michael Angelo's masterpieces. Unluckily, in proportion as his fame increased, his peculiarities grew with the advance of age more manneristic and defined; so that his imitators fixed precisely upon that which sober critics now regard as a deduction from his greatness. They failed to perceive that he owed his grandeur to his personality; and that the audacities which fascinated them, became mere whimsical extravagances when severed from his *terribilità* and sombre simplicity of impassioned thought. His power and his spirit were alike unique and uncommunicable, while the admiration of his youthful worshippers betrayed them into imitating the externals of a style that was rapidly losing spontaneity and sense of beauty. Therefore they fancied they were treading in his footsteps and using the grand manner when they covered church-roofs and canvases with sprawling figures in distorted attitudes. Instead of studying nature, they studied Michael Angelo's cartoons, exaggerating by their unintelligent discipleship his wilfulness and arbitrary choice of form.

Vasari's and Cellini's criticisms of a master they both honestly revered, may suffice to illustrate the false method adopted by these mimics of Michael Angelo's ideal. To charge him with faults proceeding from the weakness and

blindness of the decadence—the faults of men too blind to read his art aright, too weak to stand on their own feet without him—would be either stupid or malicious. If at the close of the sixteenth century the mannerists sought to startle and entrance the world by empty exhibitions of muscular anatomy misunderstood, and by a braggadocio display of meaningless effects—crowding their compositions with studies from the nude, and painting agitated groups without a discernible cause for agitation—the crime surely lay with the patrons who liked such decoration, and with the journeymen who provided it. Michael Angelo himself always made his manner serve his thought. We may fail to appreciate his manner and may be incapable of comprehending his thought; but only insincere or conceited critics will venture to gauge the latter by what they feel to be displeasing in the former. What seems lawless in him, follows the law of a profound and peculiar genius, with which, whether we like it or not, we must reckon. His imitators were devoid of thought and too indifferent to question whether there was any law to be obeyed. Like the jackass in the fable, they put on the dead lion's skin of his manner, and brayed beneath it, thinking they could roar.

Correggio, again, though he can hardly be said to have founded a school, was destined to exercise wide and perilous influence over a host of manneristic imitators. Francesco Mazzola, called Il Parmigianino, followed him so closely that his frescoes at Parma are hardly distinguishable from the master's; while Federigo Baroccio at Urbino endeavoured to preserve the sensuous and almost childish sweetness of his style in its integrity.[1] But the real attraction of Correggio was only felt when the new *barocco* architecture called for a new kind of decoration. Every cupola throughout the length

[1] Baroccio had great authority at Florence in the seventeenth century, when the cult of Correggio had overspread all Italy.

and breadth of Italy began then to be painted with rolling clouds and lolling angels. What the wits of Parma had once stigmatised as a *ragoût* of frogs, now seemed the only possible expression for celestial ecstasy; and to delineate the joy of heaven upon those multitudes of domes and semi-domes was a point of religious etiquette. False lights, dubious foreshortenings, shallow colourings, ill-studied forms, and motiveless agitation suited the taste that cared for gaudy brightness and sensational effects. The painters, for their part, found it convenient to adopt a mannerism that enabled them to conceal the difficult parts of the figure in feather beds of vapour, requiring neither effort of conception nor expenditure of labour on drawing and composition. At the same time, the Caracci made Correggio's style the object of more serious study; and the history of Bolognese painting shows what was to be derived from this master by intelligent and conscientious workmen.

Hitherto, I have had principally to record the errors of artists copying the external qualities of their great predecessors. It is refreshing to turn from the *epigoni* of the so-called Roman school to masters in whom the flame of the Renaissance still burned brightly. Andrea del Sarto, the pupil of Piero di Cosimo, but more nearly related in style to Fra Bartolommeo than to any other of the elder masters, was himself a contemporary of Raphael and Correggio. Yet he must be noticed here; because he gave new qualities to the art of Tuscany, and formed a tradition decisive for the subsequent history of Florentine painting. To make a just estimate of his achievement is a task of no small difficulty. The Italians called him 'il pittore senza errori,' or the faultless painter. What they meant by this must have been that in all the technical requirements of art, in drawing, composition, handling of fresco and oils, disposition of draperies, and feeling for light and shadow, he was above criticism. As a

colourist he went further and produced more beautiful effects than any Florentine before him. His silver-grey harmonies and liquid blendings of hues cool, yet lustrous, have a charm peculiar to himself alone. We find the like nowhere else in Italy. And yet Andrea del Sarto cannot take rank among the greatest Renaissance painters. What he lacked was precisely the most precious gift—inspiration, depth of emotion, energy of thought. We are apt to feel that even his best pictures were designed with a view to solving an æsthetic problem. Very few have the poetic charm belonging to the 'S. John' of the Pitti or the 'Madonna' of the Tribune. Beautiful as are many of his types, like the Magdalen in the large picture of the 'Pietà,'[1] we can never be sure that he will not break the spell by forms of almost vulgar mediocrity. The story that his wife, a worthless woman, sat for his Madonnas, and the legends of his working for money to meet pressing needs, seem justified by numbers of his paintings, faulty in their faultlessness and want of spirit. Still, after making these deductions, we must allow that Andrea del Sarto not unworthily represents the golden age at Florence. There is no affectation, no false taste, no trickery in his style. His workmanship is always solid; his hand unerring. If Nature denied him the soul of a poet, and the stern will needed for escaping from the sordid circumstances of his life, she gave him some of the highest qualities a painter can desire—qualities of strength, tranquillity, and thoroughness, that in the decline of the century ceased to exist outside Venice.

Among Del Sarto's followers it will be enough to mention Franciabigio, Vasari's favourite in fresco painting, Rosso de' Rossi, who carried the Florentine manner into France, and Pontormo, the masterly painter of portraits.[2] In the

[1] Pitti Palace.

[2] Franciabigio's and Rosso's frescoes stand beside Del Sarto's in the atrium of the Annunziata at Florence. Pontormo's portraits of Cosimo

historical pictures of these men, whether sacred or secular, it is clear how much was done for Florentine art by Fra Bartolommeo and Del Sarto independently of Michael Angelo and Lionardo. Angelo Bronzino, the pupil of Pontormo, is chiefly valuable for his portraits. Hard and cold, yet obviously true to life, they form a gallery of great interest for the historian of Duke Cosimo's reign. His frescoes and allegories illustrate the defects that have been pointed out in those of Raphael's and Buonarroti's imitators.[1] Want of thought and feeling, combined with the presumptuous treatment of colossal and imaginative subjects, renders these compositions inexpressibly chilling. The psychologist, who may have read a poem from Bronzino's pen, will be inclined to wonder how far this barren art was not connected with personal corruption.[2] Such speculations are, however, apt to be misleading.

Siena, after a long period of inactivity, received a fresh impulse at the same time as Florence. Giovanni Antonio Bazzi, or Razzi, called Il Sodoma, was born at Vercelli about 1477. He studied in his youth under Lionardo da Vinci, training his own exquisite sense of natural beauty in that scientific school. From Milan, after a certain interval of time, he removed to Rome, where he became a friend and follower of Raphael. These double influences determined a style that never lost its own originality. With what delicacy and *naïveté*, almost like a second Luini, but with more of humour and sensuousness, he approached historic themes, may be seen in his frescoes at Monte Oliveto.[3] They were

and Lorenzo de' Medici in the Uffizzi, though painted from busts and medallions, have a real historical value.

[1] The 'Christ in Limbo' in S. Lorenzo at Florence, and the detestable picture of 'Time, Beauty, Love, and Folly,' in our National Gallery.

[2] *Opere Burlesche*, vol. iii. pp. 39–46.

[3] Near Siena. These pictures are a series of twenty-four subjects from the life of S. Benedict.

executed before his Roman visit, and show the facility of a most graceful improvisatore. One painting representing the 'Temptation of Monks by Dancing Women' carries the melody of fluent lines and the seduction of fair girlish faces into a region of pure poetry. These frescoes are superior to Sodoma's work in the Farnesina. Impressed, as all artists were, by the monumental character of Rome, and fired by Raphael's example, he tried to abandon his sketchy and idyllic style for one of greater majesty and fulness. The delicious freshness of his earlier manner was sacrificed; but his best efforts to produce a grandiose composition ended in a confusion of individually beautiful but ill-assorted motives. Like Luini, Sodoma was never successful in pictures requiring combination and arrangement. He lacked some sense of symmetry and sought to achieve massiveness by crowding figures in a given space. When we compare his group of 'S. Catherine Fainting under the Stigmata' with the medley of agitated forms that make up his picture of the same saint at Tuldo's execution, we see plainly that he ought to have confined himself to the expression of very simple themes.[1] The former is incomparable for its sweetness; the latter is indistinct and wearying, in spite of many details that adorn it. Gifted with an exquisite feeling for the beauty of the human body, Sodoma excelled himself when he was contented with a single figure. His 'S. Sebastian,' notwithstanding its wan and faded colouring, is still the very best that has been painted.[2] Suffering, refined and spiritual, without contortion or spasm, could not be presented with more pathos in a form of more surpassing loveliness. This is a truly demonic picture in the fascination it exercises and the memory it leaves upon

[1] In the church of S. Domenico, Siena.

[2] In the Uffizzi. See also Sodoma's 'Sacrifice of Isaac' in the cathedral of Pisa, and the 'Christ Bound to the Pillar' in the Academy at Siena.

the mind. Part of its unanalysable charm may be due to the bold thought of combining the beauty of a Greek Hylas with the Christian sentiment of martyrdom. Only the Renaissance could have produced a hybrid so successful, because so deeply felt.

Sodoma's influence at Siena, where he lived a picturesque life, delighting in his horses and surrounding himself with strange four-footed pets of all sorts, soon produced a school of worthy masters. Girolamo del Pacchia, Domenico Beccafumi, and Baldassare Peruzzi, though they owed much to the stimulus of his example, followed him in no servile spirit. Indeed, it may be said that Pacchia's paintings in the Oratory of S. Bernardino, though they lacked his siren beauty, are more powerfully composed; while Peruzzi's fresco of 'Augustus and the Sibyl,' in the church of Fontegiusta, has a monumental dignity unknown to Sodoma. Beccafumi is apt to leave the spectator of his paintings cold. From inventive powers so rich and technical excellence so thorough, we demand more than he can give, and are therefore disappointed. His most interesting picture at Siena is the 'Stigmatisation of S. Catherine,' famous for its mastery of graduated whites. Much of the paved work of the Duomo is attributed to his design. Both Beccafumi and Peruzzi felt the cold and manneristic Roman style of rhetoric injuriously.

To mention the remaining schools of Italy in detail would be superfluous. True art still flourished at Ferrara, where Garofalo endeavoured to carry on the Roman manner of Raphael without the necessary strength or ideality, but also without the soulless insincerity of the mannerists. His best quality was colouring, gemlike and rich; but this found little scope for exercise in the dry and laboured style he affected. Dosso Dossi fared better, perhaps through having never experienced the seductions of Rome. His glowing colour and

quaint fancy give the attraction of romance to many of his pictures. The 'Circe,' for example, of the Borghese Palace, is worthy to rank with the best Renaissance work. It is perfectly original, not even suggesting the influence of Venice by its deep and lustrous hues. No painting is more fit to illustrate the 'Orlando Innamorato.' Just so, we feel in looking at it, did Dragontina show herself to Boiardo's fancy. Ariosto's Alcina belongs to a different family of magnificent witches.

Cremona, at this epoch, had a school of painters, influenced almost equally by the Venetians, the Milanese, and the Roman mannerists. The Campi family covered those grave Lombard vaults with stucco, fresco, and gilding in a style only just removed from the *barocco*.[1] Brescia and Bergamo remained within the influence of Venice, producing work of nearly first-rate quality in Moretto, Romanino, and Lorenzo Lotto. Moroni, the pupil of Moretto, was destined to become one of the most powerful character painters of the modern world, and to enrich the studies of historians and artists with a series of portraits impressive by their fidelity to the spirit of the sixteenth century at its conclusion. Venice herself at this period was still producing masterpieces of the genuine Renaissance. But the decline into mannerism, caused by circumstances similar to those of Rome, was not far distant.

It may seem strange to those who have visited the picture galleries of Italy, and have noticed how very large a number of the painters flourished after 1550, that I should have persistently spoken of the last half of the sixteenth century as a period of decadence. This it was, however, in a deep and true sense of the word. The force of the Renaissance was exhausted, and a time of relaxation had to be passed through,

[1] The church of S. Sigismondo, outside Cremona, is very interesting for the unity of style in its architecture and decoration.

before the reaction known as the Counter-Reformation could make itself felt in art. Then, and not till then, a new spiritual impulse produced a new style. This secondary growth of painting began to flourish at Bologna in accordance with fresh laws of taste. Religious sentiments of a different order had to be expressed; society had undergone a change, and the arts were governed by a genuine, if far inferior, inspiration. Meanwhile, the Renaissance, so far as Italy is concerned, was ended.

It is one of the sad features of this subject, that each section has to end in lamentation. Servitude in the sphere of politics; literary feebleness in scholarship; decadence in art: —to shun these conclusions is impossible. He who has undertaken to describe the parabola of a projectile, cannot be satisfied with tracing its gradual rise and determining its culmination. He must follow its spent force, and watch it slowly sink with ever dwindling impetus to earth. Intellectual movements, when we isolate them in a special country observing the causes that set them in motion and calculating their retarding influences, may, not unreasonably, be compared to the parabola of a projectile. To shrink from studying the decline of mental vigour in Italy upon the close of the Renaissance, would be therefore weak; though the task of tracing the impulse communicated by her previous energy to other nations, and their stirring under a like movement, might be more agreeable.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

The Pulpits of Pisa and Ravello

Having tried to characterise Niccola Pisano's relation to early Italian art in the second chapter of this volume, I adverted to the recent doubts which have been thrown by very competent authorities upon Vasari's legend of this master. Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, while discussing the question of his birthplace and his early training, observe, what is no doubt true, that there are no traces of good sculpture in Pisa antecedent to the Baptistery pulpit of 1260, and remark that for such a phenomenon as the sudden appearance of this masterpiece it is needful to seek some antecedents elsewhere.[1] This leads them to ask whether Niccola did not owe his origin and education to some other part of Italy. Finding at Ravello, near Amalfi, a pulpit sculptured in 1272 by Niccola di Bartolommeo da Foggia, they suggest that a school of stone-carvers may have flourished at Foggia, and that Niccola Pisano, in spite of his signing himself *Pisanus* on the Baptistery pulpit, may have been an Apulian trained in that school. The arguments adduced in favour of that hypothesis are that Niccola's father, though commonly believed to have been Ser Pietro da Siena, was perhaps called Pietro di Apulia,[2] and that meritorious artists certainly existed at Foggia and Trani. Yet the resemblance of style between the pulpits at Ravello [1272] and Pisa [1260], if that indeed exists (whereof hereafter more must be said), might be

[1] *History of Painting in Italy*, vol. i. chap. iv.
[2] *Loc. cit.* p. 127, note.

used to prove that Niccola da Foggia learned his art from Niccola Pisano, instead of the contrary; nor again, supposing the Apulian school to have flourished before 1260, is it inconsistent with the tradition of Niccola's life that he should have learned the sculptor's craft while working in his youth at Naples. For the rest, Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle dismiss the story of Pisano's studying the antique bas-reliefs at Pisa with contempt;[1] but they omit to notice the actual transcripts from those marbles introduced into his first pulpit. Again, they assume that the lunette at Lucca was one of his latest works, giving precedence to the pulpits of Pisa and Siena and the fountain of Perugia. A comparison of style no doubt renders this view plausible; for the lunette at Lucca is superior to any other of Pisano's works as a composition.

The full discussion of these points is rendered impossible by the want of contemporary information, and each student must, therefore, remain contented with his own hypothesis. Yet something can be said with regard to the Ravello pulpit that plays so important a part in the argument of the learned historians of Italian painting. Unless a strong similarity between it and Pisano's pulpits can be proved, their hypothesis carries with it no persuasion.

The pulpit in the cathedral of Ravello is formed like an ambo of the antique type. That is to say, it is a long parallelogram with flat sides, raised upon pillars, and approached by a flight of steps. These steps are enclosed within richly-ornamented walls, and stand distinct from the pulpit; a short bridge connects the two. The six pillars supporting the ambo itself are slender twisted columns with classic capitals. Three rest on lions, three on lionesses, admirably carved in different attitudes. A small projection on the north side of the pulpit sustains an eagle standing on a pillar, and spreading out his wings to bear an open book. On the arch over the entrance to the staircase projects the head of Sigelgaita, wife of Niccola Rufolo, the donor of the pulpit to the church, sculptured in the style of the Roman decadence, between two profile medallions in low relief.[2] The material of the whole is fair white marble,

[1] *Loc. cit.* p. 127.

[2] Mr. Perkins, following the suggestion of Panza, in his *Istoria dell' Antica Republica d'Amalfi*, is inclined to think that this head represents, not Sigelgaita, but Joanna II. of Naples, and is therefore more than a century later in date than the pulpit. See *Italian Sculptors* p. 51.

enriched with mosaics, and wrought into beautiful scroll-work of acanthus leaves and other Romanesque adornments. An inscription, '*Ego Magister Nicolaus de Bartholomeo de Fogia Marmorarius hoc opus feci*;' and another, '*Lapsis millenis bis centum bisque trigenis XPI. bissenis annis ab origine plenis*,' indicate the artist's name and the date of the work.

It is difficult to understand how anyone could trace such a resemblance between this rectangular ambo and the hexagonal structure in the Pisan Baptistery as would justify them in asserting both to be the products of the same school. The pulpit of Niccola da Foggia does not materially differ from other ambones in Italy—from several, for instance, in Amalfi and Ravello; while the distinctive features of Niccola Pisano's work—the combination of classically studied bas-reliefs with Gothic principles of construction, the feeling for artistic unity in the composition of groups, the mastery over plastic form, and the detached allegorical figures—are noticeable only by their total absence from it. What is left by way of similarity is a sculpturesque refinement in Sigelgaita's portrait, not unworthy of Pisano's own chisel. This, however, is but a slender point whereon to base so large a pyramid of pure conjecture. Surely we must look elsewhere than at Ravello or at Foggia for the origin of Niccola Pisano.

Why then should we reject tradition in this instance? Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle reply; because the sculpture of no Tuscan city before his period is good enough to have led up to him. Yet this may be contested; and at all events it will not be easy to prove from the Ravello head of Sigelgaita that a more advanced school existed in the south. The fact is that the art of the stone-carvers or *marmorarii* had never entirely died out since the days of Roman greatness; nor was Niccola without respectable predecessors in the very town of Lucca, where he produced the first masterpiece of modern sculpture. The circular font of S. Frediano, for example, carved with figures in high relief by a certain Robertus of the twelfth century, combines the Romanesque mannerism with the *naïveté* of mediæval fancy. I might point in particular to two knights seated on one horse in what I take to be the company of Pharaoh crossing the Red Sea, as an instance of a successful attempt to escape from the formalism of a decayed style. At the same time the general effect of the embossed work of this font is fine; nor do we fail to perceive that the artist retained some

portion of the classic feeling for grandiose and monumental composition. Far less noteworthy, yet still not utterly despicable, is the bas-relief of Biduinus over the side-door of S. Salvatore at Lucca. What Niccola added of indefeasibly his own to the style of these continuators of a dead tradition, was feeling for the beauty of classical work in a good age, and through that feeling a more perfect sympathy with nature. It is just at this point that the old tale about the sarcophagus of the Countess Beatrice conveys not only the letter but the spirit of the fact. Niccola's genius, no less vivid and life-giving than that of Giotto, infused into the hard and formal manner of his immediate predecessors true nature and true art. Between the bas-relief of S. Salvatore and the bas-relief over the north door of the Duomo at Lucca, there is indeed a broad gulf, yet such as might have been passed at one bound by a master into whose soul the beauty of a fragment of Greek art had sunk, and who had received at his birth the gift of a creative genius.

APPENDIX II

Michael Angelo's Sonnets

After the death of Michael Angelo, the manuscripts of his sonnets, madrigals, and other poems, written at various periods of his life, and well known to his intimate friends, passed into the hands of his nephew, Lionardo Buonarroti. From Lionardo they descended to his son, Michael Angelo, who was himself a poet of some mark. This grand-nephew of the sculptor prepared them for the press, and gave them to the world in 1623. On his redaction the commonly received version of the poems rested until 1863, when Signor Cesare Guasti of Florence, having gained access to the original manuscripts, published a critical edition, preserving every peculiarity of the autograph, and adding a prose paraphrase for the explanation of the text.

The younger Michael Angelo, working in an age of literary pedantry and moral prudery, fancied that it was his duty to refine the style of his great ancestor, and to remove allusions open to ignorant misconstruction. Instead, therefore, of giving an exact transcript of the original poems, he set himself to soften down their harshness, to clear away their obscurity, to amplify, transpose, and mutilate according to his own ideas of syntax, taste, and rhetoric. On the Dantesque ruggedness of Michael Angelo he engrafted the prettiness of the seventeenth Petrarchisti; and where he thought the morality of the poems was questionable, especially in the case of those addressed to Cavalieri, he did not hesitate to introduce such alterations as destroyed their obvious intention. In order to understand the effect of this method, it is only necessary to compare the autograph as printed by Guasti with the version of 1623. In Sonnet xxxi., for example, the two copies agree in only one line, while the remaining thirteen are distorted and adorned

with superfluous conceits by the over-scrupulous but not too conscientious editor of 1623.[1]

Michael Angelo's poems, even after his grand-nephew had tried to reduce them to lucidity and order, have always been considered obscure and crabbed. Nor can it be pretended that they gain in smoothness and clearness by the restoration of the true readings. On the contrary, instances of defective grammar, harsh elisions, strained metaphors, and incomplete expressions are multiplied. The difficulty of comprehending the sense is rather increased than diminished, and the obstacles to a translator become still more insurmountable than Wordsworth found them.[2] This being undoubtedly the case, the value of Guasti's edition for students of Michael Angelo is nevertheless inestimable. We read now for the first time what the greatest man of the sixteenth century actually wrote, and are able to enter, without the interference of a fictitious veil, into the shrine of his own thought and feeling. His sonnets form the best commentary on Michael Angelo's solitary life and on his sublime ideal of art. This reflection has guided me in the choice of those now offered in English, as an illustration of the chapter in this volume devoted to their author's biography.

Though the dates of Michael Angelo's compositions are conjectural, it may be assumed that the two sonnets on Dante were written when he was himself in exile. We know that, while sojourning in the house of Gian Francesco Aldovrandini at Bologna, he used to spend a portion of his time in reading Dante aloud to his protector;[3] and the indignation expressed against Florence, then as ever fickle and ungrateful, the *gente avara, invidiosa, e superba*, to use Dante's own words, seems proper to a period of just resentment. Still there is no certainty that they belong to 1495; for throughout his long life Michael Angelo was occupied with Dante. A story told of him in 1506, together with

[1] See Guasti's *Rime di Michel Agnolo Buonarrote*, Firenzi, 1863, p. 189. The future references will be made to that edition.

[2] 'I can translate, and have translated, two books of Ariosto at the rate nearly of one hundred lines a day; but so much meaning has been put by Michael Angelo into so little room, and that meaning sometimes so excellent in itself, that I found the difficulty of translating him insurmountable.'—Note to Wordsworth's English version of some sonnets of Michael Angelo.

[3] See above, p. 285.

the dialogues reported by Donato Giannotti, prove that he was regarded by his fellow-citizens as an authority upon the meaning of the 'Divine Comedy.'[1] In 1518, when the Florentine Academy petitioned Leo X. to transport the bones of Dante from Ravenna to Florence, Michael Angelo subscribed the document and offered to erect a statue worthy of the poet.[2] How deeply the study of Dante influenced his art, appears not only in the lower part of the 'Last Judgment:' we feel that source of stern and lofty inspiration in his style at large; nor can we reckon what the world lost when his volume of drawings in illustration of the 'Divine Comedy' perished at sea.[3] The two following sonnets, therefore, whenever written, may be taken as expressing his settled feeling about the first and greatest of Italian poets:[4]—

DAL CIEL DISCESE

From heaven his spirit came, and robed in clay
The realms of justice and of mercy trod,
Then rose a living man to gaze on God,
That he might make the truth as clear as day.
For that pure star that brightened with his ray
The ill-deserving nest where I was born,
The whole wide world would be a prize to scorn;
None but his Maker can due guerdon pay.

I speak of Dante, whose high work remains
Unknown, unhonoured by that thankless brood,
Who only to just men deny their wage.
Were I but he! Born for like lingering pains,
Against his exile coupled with his good
I'd gladly change the world's best heritage!

QUANTE DIRNI SI DE'

No tongue can tell of him what should be told,
For on blind eyes his splendour shines too strong;
'Twere easier to blame those who wrought him wrong,
Than sound his least praise with a mouth of gold.

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[1] See Gotti's Life, p. 48, and Giannotti's works (Firenze, Le Monnier, 1850), quoted by Gotti, pp. 249–257.

[2] See Appendix to Gotti's Life, No. 25.

[3] See Gotti's Life, p. 256.

[4] Guasti, pp. 153–155.

He to explore the place of pain was bold,
  Then soared to God, to teach our souls by song;
  The gates heaven oped to bear his feet along,
Against his just desire his country rolled.

Thankless I call her, and to her own pain
  The nurse of fell mischance; for sign take this,
  That ever to the best she deals more scorn:
Among a thousand proofs let one remain;
  Though ne'er was fortune more unjust than his,
  His equal or his better ne'er was born.

About the date of the two next sonnets there is less doubt. The first was clearly written when Michael Angelo was smarting under a sense of the ill-treatment he received from Julius. The second, composed at Rome, is interesting as the only proof we possess of the impression made upon his mind by the anomalies of the Papal rule. Here, in the capital of Christendom, he writes, holy things are sold for money to be used in warfare, and the pontiff, *quel nel manto*, paralyses the powers of the sculptor by refusing him employment.[1]

SIGNOR, SE VERO È

My Lord! if ever ancient saw spake sooth,
  Hear this which saith: Who can, doth never will.
  Lo! thou hast lent thine ear to fables still,
Rewarding those who hate the name of truth.
I am thy drudge and have been from my youth—
  Thine, like the rays which the sun's circle fill;
  Yet of my dear time's waste thou think'st no ill:
The more I toil, the less I move thy ruth.

Once 'twas my hope to raise me by thy height;
  But 'tis the balance and the powerful sword
  Of Justice, not false Echo, that we need.
Heaven, as it seems, plants virtue in despite
  Here on the earth, if this be our reward—
  To seek for fruit on trees too dry to breed.

QUA SI FA ELMI

Here helms and swords are made of chalices:
The blood of Christ is sold so much the quart:
His cross and thorns are spears and shields; and short
Must be the time ere even his patience cease.
Nay let Him come no more to raise the fees
Of fraud and sacrilege beyond report!
For Rome still slays and sells Him at the court,
Where paths are closed to virtue's fair increase.

Now were fit time for me to scrape a treasure,
Seeing that work and gain are gone; while he
Who wears the robe, is my Medusa still.
Perchance in heaven poverty is a pleasure:
But of that better life what hope have we,
When the blessed banner leads to nought but ill?

A third sonnet of this period is intended to be half burlesque, and, therefore, is composed *a coda*, as the Italians describe the lengthened form of the conclusion. It was written while Michael Angelo was painting the roof of the Sistine, and was sent to his friend Giovanni da Pistoja. The effect of this work, as Vasari tells us, on his eyesight was so injurious, that, for some time after its completion, he could only read by placing the book or manuscript above his head and looking up.[1]

I' HO GIÀ FATTO UN GOZZO

I've grown a goitre by dwelling in this den—
As cats from stagnant streams in Lombardy,
Or in what other land they hap to be—
Which drives the belly close beneath the chin:
My beard turns up to heaven; my nape falls in,
Fixed on my spine: my breast-bone visibly
Grows like a harp: a rich embroidery
Bedews my face from brush-drops thick and thin.
My loins into my paunch like levers grind;
My buttock like a crupper bears my weight;
My feet unguided wander to and fro;

[1] Guasti, p. 158.

In front my skin grows loose and long; behind,
By bending it becomes more taut and strait;
Backward I strain me like a Syrian bow:
Whence false and quaint, I know,
Must be the fruit of squinting brain and eye;
For ill can aim the gun that bends awry.
Come then, Giovanni, try
To succour my dead pictures and my fame;
Since foul I fare and painting is my shame.

The majority of the sonnets are devoted to love and beauty, conceived in the spirit of exalted Platonism. They are supposed to have been written in the latter period of his life, when he was about sixty years of age; and though we do not know for certain to whom they were in every case addressed, they may be used in confirmation of what I have said about his admiration for Vittoria Colonna and Tommaso Cavalieri.[1] The following, with its somewhat obscure adaptation of a Platonic theory of creation to his own art, was probably composed soon after Vittoria Colonna's death.[2]

SE 'L MIO ROZZO MARTELLO

When my rude hammer to the stubborn stone
Gives human shape, now that, now this, at will,
Following his hand who wields and guides it still,
It moves upon another's feet alone.
But He who dwells in heaven all things doth fill
With beauty by pure motions of his own;
And since tools fashion tools which else were none,
His life makes all that lives with living skill.

Now, for that every stroke excels the more
The closer to the forge it still ascend,
Her soul that quickened mine hath sought the skies:
Wherefore I find my toil will never end,
If God, the great artificer, denies
That tool which was my only aid before.

The next is peculiarly valuable, as proving with what intense and religious fervour Michael Angelo addressed himself to the

[1] See above, pp. 317–319. [2] Guasti, p. 226.

worship of intellectual beauty. He alone, in that age of sensuality and animalism, pierced through the form of flesh and sought the divine idea it imprisoned:[1]—

PER RITORNAR LÀ

As one who will reseek her home of light,
Thy form immortal to this prison-house
Descended, like an angel piteous,
To heal all hearts and make the whole world bright.
'Tis this that thralls my heart in love's delight,
Not thy clear face of beauty glorious;
For he who harbours virtue, still will choose
To love what neither years nor death can blight.

So fares it ever with things high and rare,
Wrought in the sweat of nature; heaven above
Showers on their birth the blessings of her prime;
Nor hath God deigned to show Himself elsewhere
More clearly than in human forms sublime;
Which, since they image Him, compel my love.

The same Platonic theme is slightly varied in the two following sonnets:[2]—

SPIRTO BEN NATO

Choice soul, in whom, as in a glass, we see,
Mirrored in thy pure form and delicate,
What beauties heaven and nature can create,
The paragon of all their works to be!
Fair soul, in whom love, pity, piety,
Have found a home, as from thy outward state
We clearly read, and are so rare and great
That they adorn none other like to thee!

Love takes me captive; beauty binds my soul;
Pity and mercy with their gentle eyes
Wake in my heart a hope that cannot cheat.
What law, what destiny, what fell control,
What cruelty, or late or soon, denies
That death should spare perfection so complete?

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[1] Guasti, p. 218. [2] *Ib.* pp. 182, 210.

DAL DOLCE PIANTO

From sweet laments to bitter joys, from peace
Eternal to a brief and hollow truce,
How have I fallen!—when 'tis truth we lose,
Mere sense survives our reason's dear decease.
I know not if my heart bred this disease,
That still more pleasing grows with growing use;
Or else thy face, thine eyes, in which the hues
And fires of Paradise dart ecstasies.

Thy beauty is no mortal thing; 'twas sent
From heaven on high to make our earth divine:
Wherefore, though wasting, burning, I'm content;
For in thy sight what could I do but pine?
If God Himself thus rules my destiny,
Who, when I die, can lay the blame on thee?

The next is saddened by old age and death. Love has yielded to piety, and is only remembered as what used to be. Yet in form and feeling this is quite one of the most beautiful in the series supposed to refer to Vittoria Colonna:[1]—

TORNAMI AL TEMPO

Bring back the time when blind desire ran free,
With bit and rein too loose to curb his flight;
Give back the buried face, once angel-bright,
That hides in earth all comely things from me;
Bring back those journeys ta'en so toilsomely,
So toilsome-slow to him whose hairs are white;
Those tears and flames that in one breast unite;
If thou wilt once more take thy fill of me!

Yet Love! Suppose it true that thou dost thrive
Only on bitter honey-dews of tears,
Small profit hast thou of a weak old man.
My soul that toward the other shore doth strive,
Wards off thy darts with shafts of holier fears;
And fire feeds ill on brands no breath can fan.

After this it only remains to quote the celebrated sonnet used by Varchi for his dissertation, the best known of all Michael

[1] Guasti, p. 212

Angelo's poems.[1] The thought is this: just as a sculptor hews from a block of marble the form that lies concealed within, so the lover has to extract from his lady's heart the life or death of his soul.

NON HA L'OTTIMO ARTISTA

The best of artists hath no thought to show
Which the rough stone in its superfluous shell
Doth not include: to break the marble spell
Is all the hand that serves the brain can do.
The ill I shun, the good I seek, even so
In thee, fair lady, proud, ineffable,
Lies hidden: but the art I wield so well
Works adverse to my wish, and lays me low.

Therefore not love, nor thy transcendent face,
Nor cruelty, nor fortune, nor disdain,
Cause my mischance, nor fate, nor destiny;
Since in thy heart thou carriest death and grace
Enclosed together, and my worthless brain
Can draw forth only death to feed on me.

The fire of youth was not extinct, we feel, after reading these last sonnets. There is, indeed, an almost pathetic intensity of passion in the recurrence of Michael Angelo's thoughts to a sublime love on the verge of the grave. Not less important in their bearing on his state of feeling are the sonnets addressed to Cavalieri; and though his modern editor shrinks from putting a literal interpretation upon them, I am convinced that we must accept them simply as an expression of the artist's homage for the worth and beauty of an excellent young man. The two sonnets I intend to quote next[2] were written, according to Varchi's direct testimony, for Tommaso Cavalieri, 'in whom'—the words are Varchi's—'I discovered, besides incomparable personal beauty, so much charm of nature, such excellent abilities, and such a graceful manner, that he deserved, and still deserves, to be the better loved the more he is known.' The play of words upon Cavalieri's name in the last line of the first sonnet, the evidence of Varchi, and the indirect witness

[1] Delivered before the Florentine Academy in 1546. See Guasti, p. 173, for the sonnet, and p. lxxv. for the dissertation. See also Gotti, p. 249, for Michael Angelo's remarks upon the latter.

[2] Guasti, pp. 189, 188.

of Condivi, together with Michael Angelo's own letters,[1] are sufficient in my judgment to warrant the explanation I have given above. Nor do I think that the doubts expressed by Guasti about the intention of the sonnets,[2] or Gotti's curious theory that the letters, though addressed to Cavalieri, were meant for Vittoria Colonna,[3] are much more honourable to Michael Angelo's reputation than the garbling process whereby the verses were rendered unintelligible in the edition of 1623.

A CHE PIÙ DEBB' IO

Why should I seek to ease intense desire
With still more tears and windy words of grief,
When heaven, or late or soon, sends no relief
To souls whom love hath robed around with fire?
Why need my aching heart to death aspire
When all must die? Nay, death beyond belief
Unto these eyes would be both sweet and brief,
Since in my sum of woes all joys expire!

Therefore because I cannot shun the blow
I rather seek, say who must rule my breast,
Gliding between her gladness and her woe?
If only chains and bands can make me blest,
No marvel if alone and bare I go
An armèd Knight's captive and slave confessed.

VEGGIO CO' BEI VOSTRI OCCHI

With your fair eyes a charming light I see,
For which my own blind eyes would peer in vain;
Stayed by your feet the burden I sustain
Which my lame feet find all too strong for me;
Wingless upon your pinions forth I fly;
Heavenward your spirit stirreth me to strain;
E'en as you will, I blush and blanch again,
Freeze in the sun, burn 'neath a frosty sky.

Your will includes and is the lord of mine;
Life to my thoughts within your heart is given:
My words begin to breathe upon your breath:
Like to the moon am I, that cannot shine
Alone; for lo! our eyes see nought in heaven
Save what the living sun illumineth.

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[1] See *Archivio Buonarroti*; and above, p. 318, note 2.
[2] *Rime*, p. xlv. [3] Gotti's Life, pp. 231–238

Whether we are justified in assigning the following pair to the Cavalieri series is more doubtful. They seem, however, to proceed from a similar mood of the poet's mind.[1]

S' UN CASTO AMOR

If love be chaste, if virtue conquer ill,
If fortune bind both lovers in one bond,
If either at the other's grief despond,
If both be governed by one life, one will;
If in two bodies one soul triumph still,
Raising the twain from earth to heaven beyond,
If love with one blow and one golden wand
Have power both smitten breasts to pierce and thrill;

If each the other love, himself foregoing,
With such delight, such savour, and so well,
That both to one sole end their wills combine;
If thousands of these thoughts all thought outgoing
Fail the least part of their firm love to tell;
Say, can mere angry spite this knot untwine?

COLUI CHE FECE

He who ordained, when first the world began,
Time that was not before creation's hour,
Divided it, and gave the sun's high power
To rule the one, the moon the other span:
Thence fate and changeful chance and fortune's ban
Did in one moment down on mortals shower:
To me they portioned darkness for a dower;
Dark hath my lot been since I was a man.

Myself am ever mine own counterfeit;
And as deep night grows still more dim and dun,
So still of more mis-doing must I rue:
Meanwhile this solace to my soul is sweet,
That my black night doth make more clear the sun
Which at your birth was given to wait on you.

A sonnet written for Luigi del Riccio, on the death of his friend Cecchino Bracci, is curious on account of its conceit.[2] Michael

[1] Guasti, pp. 190–202. [2] *Ib.* p. 162.

Angelo says: 'Cecchino, whom you loved, is dead; and if I am to make his portrait, I can only do so by drawing you, in whom he still lives.' Here, again, we trace the Platonic conception of love as nothing if not spiritual, and of beauty as a form that finds its immortality within the lover's soul. This Cecchino was a boy who died at the age of seventeen. Michael Angelo wrote his epicedion in several centuries of verses, distributed among his friends in the form of what he terms *polizzini*, as though they were trifles.

A PENA PRIMA

Scarce had I seen for the first time his eyes
Which to thy living eyes are life and light,
When closed at last in death's injurious night
He opened them on God in Paradise.
I know it and I weep, too late made wise:
Yet was the fault not mine; for death's fell spite
Robbed my desire of that supreme delight,
Which in thy better memory never dies.

Therefore, Luigi, if the task be mine
To make unique Cecchino smile in stone
For ever, now that earth hath made him dim,
If the beloved within the lover shine,
Since art without him cannot work alone
Thee must I carve to tell the world of him.

In contrast with the philosophical obscurity of many of the sonnets hitherto quoted, I place the following address to Night—one, certainly, of Michael Angelo's most beautiful and characteristic compositions, as it is also the most transparent in style[1]:—

O NOTT', O DOLCE TEMPO

O night, O sweet though sombre span of time!—
All things find rest upon their journey's end—
Whoso hath praised thee, well doth apprehend;
And whoso honours thee, hath wisdom's prime.
Our cares thou canst to quietude sublime,
For dews and darkness are of peace the friend;
Often by thee in dreams upborne I wend
From earth to heaven, where yet I hope to climb.

[1] Guasti, p. 205.

Thou shade of Death, through whom the soul at length
Shuns pain and sadness hostile to the heart,
Whom mourners find their last and sure relief!
Thou dost restore our suffering flesh to strength,
Driest our tears, assuagest every smart,
Purging the spirits of the pure from grief.

The religious sonnets have been reserved to the last. These were composed in old age, when the early impressions of Savonarola's teaching revived, and when Michael Angelo had grown to regard even his art and the beauty he had loved so purely, as a snare. If we did not bear in mind the piety expressed throughout his correspondence, their ascetic tone, and the remorse they seem to indicate, would convey a painful sense of cheerlessness and disappointment. As it is, they strike me as the natural utterance of a profoundly devout and somewhat melancholy man, in whom religion has survived all other interests, and who, reviewing his past life of fame and toil, finds that the sole reality is God. The two first of these compositions are addressed to Giorgio Vasari.[1]

GIUNTO È GIÀ

Now hath my life across a stormy sea
Like a frail bark reached that wide port where all
Are bidden ere the final judgment fall,
Of good or evil deeds to pay the fee.
Now know I well how that fond phantasy
Which made my soul the worshipper and thrall
Of earthly art, is vain; how criminal
Is that which all men seek unwillingly.

Those amorous thoughts which were so lightly dressed,
What are they when the double death is nigh?
The one I know for sure, the other dread.
Painting nor sculpture now can lull to rest
My soul that turns to His great love on high,
Whose arms to clasp us on the cross were spread.

LE FAVOLE DEL MONDO

The fables of the world have filched away
The time I had for thinking upon God;
His grace lies buried deep 'neath oblivion's sod,
Whence springs an evil-crop of sins alway.

[1] Guasti, pp. 230-232.

What makes another wise, leads me astray,
Slow to discern the bad path I have trod:
Hope fades; but still desire ascends that God
May free me from self-love, my sure decay.

Shorten half-way my road to heaven from earth?
Dear Lord, I cannot even half-way rise,
Unless Thou help me on this pilgrimage:
Teach me to hate the world so little worth,
And all the lovely things I once did prize;
That endless life, not death, may be my wage.

The same note is struck in the following, which breathes the spirit of a Penitential Psalm:[1]—

CARICO D' ANNI

Burdened with years and full of sinfulness,
With evil custom grown inveterate,
Both deaths I dread that close before me wait,
Yet feed my heart on poisonous thoughts no less.
No strength I find in mine own feebleness
To change or life or love or use or fate,
Unless Thy heavenly guidance come, though late,
Which only helps and stays our nothingness.

'Tis not enough, dear Lord, to make me yearn
For that celestial home, where yet my soul
May be new made, and not, as erst, of nought:
Nay, ere Thou strip her mortal vestment, turn
My steps toward the steep ascent, that whole
And pure before Thy face she may be brought.

In reading the two next, we may remember that, at the end of his life, Michael Angelo was occupied with designs for a picture of the Crucifixion, which he never executed, though he gave a drawing of Christ upon the cross to Vittoria Colonna; and that his last work in marble was the unfinished 'Pietà' in the Duomo at Florence.[2]

SCARCO D' UN IMPORTUNA

Freed from a burden sore and grievous band,
Dear Lord, and from this wearying world untied,
Like a frail bark I turn me to Thy side,
As from a fierce storm to a tranquil land.

[1] Guasti, pp. 244, 245. [2] *Ib.* pp. 241–245.

Thy thorns, Thy nails, and either bleeding hand,
With Thy mild gentle piteous face, provide
Promise of help and mercies multiplied,
And hope that yet my soul secure may stand.

Let not Thy holy eyes be just to see
My evil past, Thy chastened ears to hear
And stretch the arm of judgment to my crime:
Let Thy blood only lave and succour me,
Yielding more perfect pardon, better cheer
As older still I grow with lengthening time.

NON FUR MEN LIETI

Not less elate than smitten with wild woe
To see not them but Thee by death undone,
Were those blest souls, when Thou above the sun
Didst raise, by dying, men that lay so low:
Elate, since freedom from all ills that flow
From their first fault for Adam's race was won;
Sore smitten, since in torment fierce God's son
Served servants on the cruel cross below.

Heaven showed she knew Thee, who Thou wert and whence.
Veiling her eyes above the riven earth;
The mountains trembled and the seas were troubled:
He took the Fathers from hell's darkness dense:
The torments of the damnèd fiends redoubled:
Man only joyed, who gained baptismal birth.

The collection of his poems is closed with yet another sonnet in the same lofty strain of prayer, and faith, and hope in God.[1]

MENTRE M' ATTRISTA

Mid weariness and woe I find some cheer
In thinking of the past, when I recall
My weakness and my sins and reckon all
The vain expense of days that disappear:
This cheers by making, ere I die, more clear
The frailty of what men delight miscall;
But saddens me to think how rarely fall
God's grace and mercies in life's latest year

[1] Guasti, p. 246.

For though Thy promises our faith compel,
Yet, Lord, what man shall venture to maintain
That pity will condone our long neglect?
Still, from Thy blood poured forth we know full well
How without measure was Thy martyr's pain,
How measureless the gifts we dare expect.

From the thought of Dante, through Plato, to the thought of Christ: so our study of Michael Angelo's sonnets has carried us. In communion with these highest souls Michael Angelo habitually lived; for he was born of their lineage, and was like them a life-long alien on the earth.

APPENDIX III

Chronological Tables of the Principal Artists mentioned in this Volume

The lists which follow have been drawn up with a view to assisting the reader of my chapters on Architecture, Sculpture, and Painting. I have only included the more prominent names; and these I have placed in the order of their occurrence in the foregoing pages. In compiling them, I have consulted the Index to Le Monnier's edition of Vasari (1870), Crowe and Cavalcaselle's 'History of Painting,' and Milizia's 'Dictionary of Architects'

ARCHITECTS

Name	Born	Died	Page
Arnolfo di Cambio	1240	1311	45
Giotto di Bondone	1276	1337	46
Andrea Orcagna	—	about 1369	46
Filippo Brunelleschi	1377	1446	53
Leo Battista Alberti	1405	1472	53
Michellozzo Michellozzi	1391	1472	55
Benedetto da Majano	1442	1497	55
Giuliano di San Gallo	1445	1516	55
Antonio di San Gallo	1455	1534?	55
Antonio Filarete	—	1465?	56
Bramante Lazzari	1444	1514	59
Cristoforo Rocchi	—	—	60
Ventura Vitoni	—	—	60
Raffaello Santi	1483	1520	60
Giulio Romano	1499	1546	60
Baldassare Peruzzi	1481	1536	61
Jacopo Sansovino	1477	1570	61
Michele Sanmicheli	1484	1559	62
Baccio d'Agnolo	1462	1543	62
Michael Angelo Buonarroti	1475	1564	62
Andrea Palladio	1518	1580	69
Giacomo Barozzi	1507	1573	69
Vincenzo Scamozzi	1552	1616	69
Galeazzo Alessi	1500	1572	69
Bartolommeo Ammanati	1511	1592	69

SCULPTORS

Name	Born	Died	Page
Niccola Pisano	after 1200	1278	74
Giovanni Pisano	about 1240	1320	81
Lorenzo Maitani	—	1330	85
Andrea Pisano	about 1273	about 1349	87
Giotto di Bondone	1276	1337	88
Nino Pisano	—	about 1360	90
Giovanni Balduccio	about 1300	about 1347	90
Filippo Calendario	—	1355	90
Andrea Orcagna	—	about 1369	90
Lorenzo Ghiberti	1378	1455	93
Giacomo della Quercia	1374	1438	93
Filippo Brunelleschi	1377	1446	93
Donatello	1386	1466	99
Andrea Verocchio	1435	1488	103
Alessandro Leopardi	—	after 1522	104
Antonio Pollajuolo	1429	1498	106
Piero Pollajuolo	1441	1489 ?	107
Luca della Robbia	1400	1482	107
Agostino di Duccio	—	after 1461	109
Antonio Rossellino	1427	1478 ?	111
Matteo Civitali	1435	1501	114
Mino da Fiesole	1431	1484	115
Desiderio da Settignano	1428	1464	116
Guido Mazzoni	—	1518	119
Antonio Begarelli	1479	about 1565	119
Antonio Amadeo	1447 ?	about 1520	119
Andrea Contucci	1460	1529	120
Jacopo Sansovino	1477	1570	121
Michael Angelo Buonarroti	1475	1564	124
Raffaello da Montelupo	1505	1567	125
Giovanni Angelo Montorsoli	1507	1563	125
Baccio Bandinelli	1493	1560	125
Bartolommeo Ammanati	1511	1592	125
Benvenuto Cellini	1500	1571	127
Gian Bologna	1524	1608	127

PAINTERS

Name	Born	Died	Page
Giovanni Cimabue	1240 ?	1302 ?	136
Giotto di Bondone	1276	1337	138
Andrea Orcagna	—	about 1369	145
Ambrogio Lorenzetti	—	about 1348	146
Pietro Lorenzetti	—	about 1350	146

PAINTERS—*continued*

Name	Born	Died	Page
Taddeo Gaddi	about 1300	1366	149
Francesco Traini	—	after 1378	151
Duccio di Buoninsegna	—	about 1320	156
Simone Martini	1285?	1344	158
Taddeo di Bartolo	about 1362	1422	159
Spinello Aretino	—	1410	159
Masolino da Panicale	1384	1447?	166
Masaccio	1402	1429	166
Paolo Uccello	1397	1475	168
Andrea del Castagno	1396	1457	169
Piero della Francesca	1420?	1506?	170
Melozzo da Forli	about 1438	1494	171
Francesco Squarcione	1394	1474	172
Gentile da Fabriano	about 1370	about 1450	173
Fra Angelico	1387	1455	174
Benozzo Gozzoli	1420	1498	175
Lippo Lippi	1412?	1469	177
Filippino Lippi	1457	1504	179
Sandro Botticelli	1447	1510	181
Piero di Cosimo	1462	1521?	186
Domenico Ghirlandajo	1449	before 1498	187
Andrea Mantegna	1431	1506	197
Luca Signorelli	about 1441	1523	203
Pietro Perugino	1446	1524	214
Bernardo Pinturicchio	1454	1513	220
Francesco Francia	1450	1517	221
Fra Bartolommeo	1475	1517	222
Mariotto Albertinelli	1474	1515	222
Lionardo da Vinci	1452	1519	227
Raffaello Santi	1483	1520	239
Antonio Allegri da Correggio	1494?	1534	247
Michael Angelo Buonarroti	1475	1564	250
Bartolommeo Vivarini	—	after 1499	264
Jacopo Bellini	1400?	1464?	265
Gentile Bellini	1426	1507	265
Vittore Carpaccio	—	after 1519	266
Giovanni Bellini	1427	1516	267
Giorgione	1478	1511	268
Tiziano Vecelli	1477	1576	270
Paolo Veronese	1530	1588	270
Tintoretto	1512	1594	270
Giovanni Antonio Beltraffio	1467	1516	354
Marco d' Oggiono	about 1470	1530	354
Cesare da Sesto	—	about 1524	354
Bernardino Luini	about 1460	after 1530	355
Gaudenzio Ferrari	1484	1549	357
Giulio Romano	1499	1546	359

PAINTERS—*continued*

Name	Born	Died	Page
Giovanni da Udine . .	1487	1564	359
Perino del Vaga . . .	1499	1547	359
Marcello Venusti . . .	—	about 1584	361
Sebastian del Piombo . .	1485	1547	361
Daniele da Volterra . .	about 1509	1566	361
Il Parmigianino . . .	1504	1540	362
Federigo Baroccio . .	1528	1612	362
Andrea del Sarto . . .	1487	1531	363
Jacopo Pontormo . .	1494	1557	364
Angelo Bronzino . . .	1502	1572	365
Il Sodoma	1477	1549	365
Baldassare Peruzzi . .	1481	1536	367
Domenico Beccafumi . .	1486	1551	367
Benvenuto Garofalo . .	1481	1559	367
Dosso Dossi	about 1479	1542	367
Moretto	about 1500	after 1556	368
Giovanni Battista Moroni .	1510	1578	368
Giorgio Vasari . . .	1511	1574	—

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